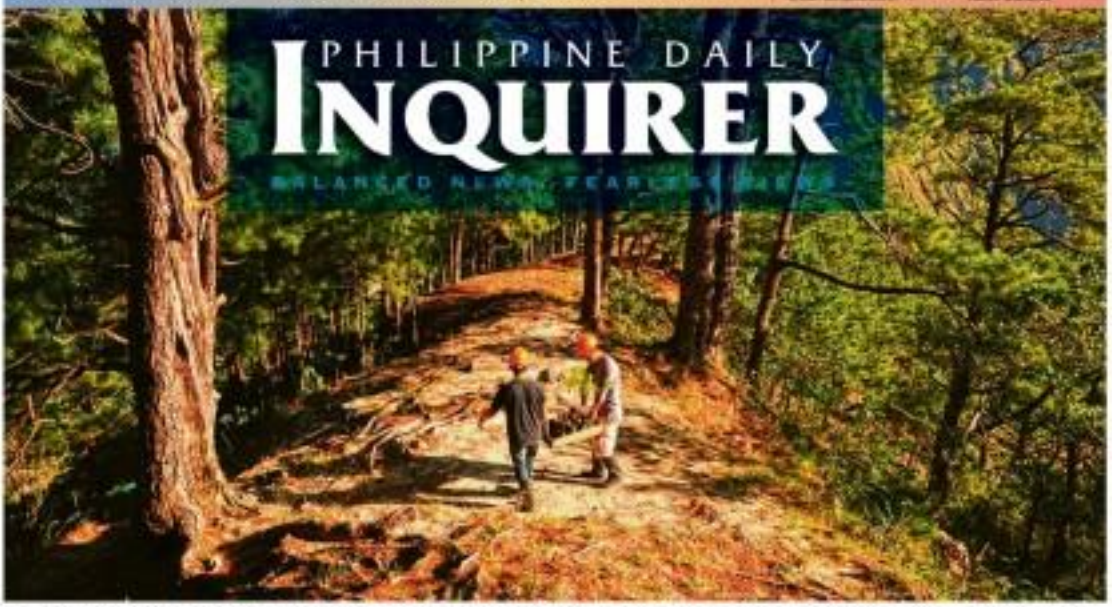
Saturday, February 18, 2012 ★★ Exactions / Vol. 27 / No. 72 P18 | Mobile Alerts Text INQ to 2920 | www.inquirer.net Twitter: @inquirerdotnet

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS



THE TREES FOR THE FOREST Two employees of Philex Mining carry saplings for planting as part of the firm's program to rebuild forests and train the mining community on alternative business prospects. Philex participated in the Jan. 23 "After Mining Workshop" that discussed ways of how technology can help rehabilitate mined-out areas. ROBERT LUCAS/INQUIRER.NET

'Strictest in the world'

Defense: It's Cristina's money from family firm

By TJ Burgonio and Gil C. Cabacungan

WHAT WOULD a husband do if his wife's money is in danger of being scrutinized?

That's how the defense lawyers of impeached Chief Justice Renato Corona yesterday framed the issue when confronted with testimony that Corona closed three peso time deposit accounts on the day in December 2011 that he was impeached by House lawmakers.

Corona terminated his three
DEFENSE A/5

CJ dares P-Noy to show bank, psycho records

By Jorane Aning

TIT for tat.

Chief Justice Renato Corona yesterday issued a stinging statement in response to President Aquino's remark in reshuffles, saying the latter should not meddle in the Senate impeachment trial and nothing less for supposedly
CORONA A/4

De Lima meets whistle-blower

By Jorane Aning

WHISTLE BLOWER Kaliangsan Mukhlis asked for extra protection during a meeting yesterday with Justice Secretary Leila de Lima, showing her documents supposedly proving his claim that corruptions and other irregularities were continuing at the Ilocos Biofuel Project (IBP).

This was disclosed to reporters by anticorruption crusader Sandra Cam, who accompanied Mukhlis to the briefing meeting at the justice depart-
DE LIMA A/17

JOY OF READING A girl scans a book at the bookshop of MV Logos Hope docked at the South Harbor, Manila, on Friday. The Logos Hope is the world's largest floating book fair offering an expanded selection of over 5,000 titles at affordable prices. The ship will be in Manila from Feb. 17 to March 13. ARIEL CELESTIAL/INQUIRER.NET

Basa-Guidote, Coronas feuding since '89

By Inquirer Research

A FAMILY dispute for control of a 50-year-old corporation has inserted itself into the national debate as a titillating sideshow to the ongoing impeachment trial of Chief Justice Renato Corona.

At the hearing on Thursday, it was revealed in testimony that three accounts in the name of Corona at the Philippine Savings Bank (PSBank) containing P12.6 million were closed on Dec. 12, 2011, the day 188 House members signed the im-
peachment complaint against the Chief Justice.

Corona's lawyers explained that the money belonged to the Basa-Guidote Enterprises Inc. (BGEI), a corporation of Cristina Reyes-Corona's family of
BASA-GUIDOTE A/15

PGH 1945: Days of terror, nights of fear

By Miguel P. Avancena

REMEMBRANCE

(Editor's Note: The author, a retired officer of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, is the youngest son of the late Chief Justice Ramon Q. Avancena, who served during the American and Commonwealth eras.)

THE BATTLE for the liberation of the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) on Taft Avenue in Manila was only one of a series of street-by-street, house-to-house and building-to-building fights that was the story of the liberation of the city in 1945. It was also one of the fiercest.

American and Filipino soldiers who participated in the liberation of Manila, which took place from Feb. 3 to March 3, 1945, told civilian survivors it
PGH 1945 A/17

BEAUTY OF THE BEAST Christina Bunggal plays with a horribly disfigured but treasured family pet Kalsang in Zamboanga City. ZAMBOANGA INQUIRER/CONTRIBUTOR

Pet dog saves 2 girls, but loses her face

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The story of Kalsang is one more heartwarming tales on the familiar theme of the pet dog to life savior.

Cousins Dina Bunggal, 11, and Princess Dianning, 5, were walking across Mukas Extension on Dec. 18 and knowing that a speeding motorcycle was bearing down on them. At the crucial moment, Kalsang, the Bunggal family's dog, emerged from nowhere and jumped into the motorcycle's path.
PET DOG A/17

US: Bank secrecy laws here hinder war vs graft

By Michael Lim Ubac and Lucy Swinnen

THE UNITED States has questioned the antiquated bank secrecy laws of the Philippines, describing them as "among the strictest in the world," in the face of the global trend toward transparency.

The criticisms made by two US envoys are contained in a series of cables from 2005 and 2008, and have been made public by the the whistle-blower website, Wikileaks.

Former US ambassadors to Manila Francis Ricciardone and Kristie Kenney, in separate cable dispatches sent to Washington, said the banking secrecy laws in the country were "hampering" transparent governance and anticorruption mechanisms, and went against the global trend relaxing bank secrecy laws.

Foreshadowing events in the Philippines as early as 2007, Kenney talked of "institutional challenges"—which included bank secrecy laws and poor protection for whistle-blowers—as serious barriers to corruption convic-
STRICTEST! A/4

How prosecution got CJ's bank record deserves its own probe / A4

NEWS
London court seeks to settle tug-of-war over Iggy's body / A3

METRO
MMDA declares war on water lilies / A21

WORLD
UN General Assembly votes to condemn Syrian leader / A24

NEWS
Kindergarten now a must in public school / A3

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY: Severe storms will continue over Metro Manila and other parts of Luzon, bringing heavy rains and strong winds. Cloudy skies with scattered showers are expected in the rest of the country.

Metro Manila	Mostly cloudy	Southwest	Cloudy with heavy rains
Baguio	Mostly cloudy	Variable	Cloudy with rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with rains	Calm	Cloudy with rains
Legazpi	Mostly cloudy	Variable	Mostly cloudy
Puerto Princesa	Mostly cloudy	Calm, variable	Mostly cloudy
Tagaytay	Mostly cloudy	Variable	Cloudy with rains
Iloilo	Mostly cloudy	Variable	Mostly cloudy
Cagayan de Oro	Mostly cloudy	Variable	Mostly cloudy
Zamboanga	Mostly cloudy	Variable	Mostly cloudy

Second FRONTPAGE

PCSO

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LOTTO 6/42 Two (2) LOTTO, valid to 6/42. PCSOdotPH

Early arraignment for GMA

By Miko Morales

THE PASAY Regional Trial Court has agreed to the request of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to be arraigned separately from former Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan Sr. and provincial election supervisor Lintang Bedol, her two coaccused in the electoral sabotage case filed by the Commission on Elections.

Arroyo's lawyer, Rep. Monti Suarez, told reporters that the former president and now Pampanga representative requested that she be arraigned ahead of the two, citing the series of postponements on her physical condition as well as on her security preparations.

The arraignment was scheduled for Feb. 20 but Judge Jesus Mupas reset it for March 19 after Ampatuan and Bedol sought its deferment to give them more time to comment on various pleadings.

Arroyo, currently detained at the Veterans Memorial hospital in Quezon City, is suffering from a degenerative bone disease.

Ampatuan Sr. is currently detained at Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City for another case—allegedly masterminding the Maguindanao massacre of over 57 people in 2009.

Bedol is being detained at Camp Crame, Quezon City.

The Commission on Elections charged Arroyo, Ampatuan Sr. and Bedol of electoral sabotage for allegedly rigging the results in the 2007 senatorial elections in Maguindanao to give candidates of the then Arroyo administration a significant lead.

ACTIVISTS turn inside the main gate of the Veterans Memorial Medical Center to demand the detention of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in a regular jail cell. VANNEE BARCIAS

Court spokesperson Felda Domingo said Mupas granted Arroyo's request, but he has yet to schedule a new arraignment date for her.

'Mental preparation'

Arroyo's lawyer had pleaded for the holding of the arraignment on Monday as scheduled.

"[The accused] has to prepare mentally for that. If it gets deferred again, it will be hard for her because she will have to build her strength up to prepare for another date," Suarez said.

Suarez also argued that the arraignment of the former president on the same day as her two coaccused "could present risks on the former president's security and her health as well." He described his client's condition as still "sensitive."

Commenting on Arroyo's request, the head of the Corrections department, Esmeralda Ladra, said the prosecution was merely being pragmatic when it proposed arraigning all the accused in one day, taking into account logistics preparations.

She said the prosecution "did not want to add unrest" to the former president, but "will regard to securing we think it would be practical for the sake for [of the three accused] to be done once."

Security check

The court spokesperson said the arraignment would "likely be scheduled soon," explaining that security measures would first be laid out before the court decided on the date.

She added it was highly unlikely that Arroyo's arraignment would push through on Monday.

London court seeks PH experts on Iggy's body

By Jullie M. Aurelio

A LONDON court is reportedly seeking a video conference with experts on Philippine law to settle the legal issues between its countries key rules bar the rightful claimants on the body of deceased Filipino Overseas Worker Ignacio Arroyo.

The case revealed in a hearing before a Queens Life court room across the highway by the lawyer of Alicia Vista Arroyo, the representative of the legal wife, who is standing her claim over the body.

Alicia wants the Philippine court to issue a temporary restraining order against late husband's parents, Grace Bunoz, who filed an issues him with a London court to stop Alicia from getting the body, citing a document signed by Arroyo naming his—not the estranged wife—as his executor.

Arroyo's body has been in a freezer in a London morgue since his death due to a liver ailment on Jan. 26.

Alicia had gone to London but failed to bring home the body of her husband.

Bunoz counsel, Lorna Espinosa, told Judge Elizabeth Ballinar of Regional Trial Court Branch 30 that they received information that the London court intends to consult with Philippine law experts.

According to Espinosa, this is routine by a video conferencing call with solicitors of Philippine law is researched on solicitors that the London court is "consulting if the no competence on Philippine law."

"If Mr Bunoz is in good faith, she should be here... If she had clean hands she should fight in a Philippine court," the lawyer argued.

"We don't intend to fight there. It is undignified for the wife to fight in foreign location where she has no control at all," the Arroyo Bunoz added.

Alicia's camp has consistently maintained that as the legal wife, Alicia is duly bound under the law to take custody of her husband's remains, citing the Revised Administrative Code and the Civil Code.

The marriage was undergoing annulment proceedings but it had not been finalized when Arroyo died.

Bunoz's defense

Bunoz was represented at the London Case Pending by lawyer Leonard de Vera, who pointed out that even the courts "must respect the will of deceased men."

"We mean his body, why can't he decide who will take care of him? It is an utmost insult to the dead to have his body taken care and disposed of by a person he despises," he countered.

De Vera cited Feb 2009 acknowledgements executed by the deceased—an "advanced healthcare directive" and a declaration of trust—which did not mention Alicia's name at all.

The "advanced healthcare directive" named Bunoz and a daughter, Bernadette Arroyo Tamayo, as agents should doctors declare him to be "no longer able to make his own decisions."

A Declaration of Trust also named Tamayo, his daughter with first wife Marilyn Justice, as a trustee who will hold his estate in trust until Bunoz's death.

Ignacio and Alicia, married in 1998, have been estranged since 2006 when the lawmaker left the couple's conjugal home to live with Bunoz. It was the Alicia who was with him in his final moments.

Its cross examination on Thursday the wife said she had caused for her husband when he underwent hip replacement and was diagnosed with a rare bone disease. This was apart from a liver problem that he had. But still Arroyo fell ill in June 2006, she only got updates on her husband's condition from friends and relatives.

The chief a civilian major Flamiano, who told her three years ago that "here," Arroyo's substitute, was in London seeking treatment for his liver problem and that he had bought an apartment there.

De Vera asked Alicia if she was able to confirm such reports, to which she answered negatively, saying her husband no longer visited their daughter.

Asked if she had ever communicated with her husband's current partner, she responded: "I don't speak to a mistress who stole my husband."

Alicia added that Bunoz had she told her that her husband was seeking treatment for his failing health.

Asked by de Vera if she had inquired about Arroyo's health, she replied and he seemed to, saying that she relative had to leave immediately after the event. She was only able to say "I am sorry."

The lawyer said he found it hard to believe that Alicia did not ask on how Iggy was living. "You want the court to believe that you are still a caring, legitimate wife?" Bunoz's lawyer demanded.

Alicia replied, "Yes, yes, yes, yes."

Kindergarten now a must in public school, law says

By Tara Quinsaat

THE GOVERNMENT is moving to strengthen a kindergarten system to comply with a law making preschool a requisite for entry to Grade 1.

President Aquino signed the law on Jan. 23 and will formally announce its enactment in a ceremony attended by education officials and legislators in Metro Manila on Feb. 27.

The Department of Education (DepEd) this week disseminated to school officials copies of Republic Act No. 10157, or the Kindergarten Education Act, which makes kindergarten "the first stage of compulsory and mandatory basic education."

"Kindergarten education is vital to the success and academic achievement of the Filipino child for it is the period when the average child's cognitive capacity for learning is at its sharpest," according to the law.

Under the law, 5-year-olds will be required to take up a year in kindergarten in preparation for entry to Grade 1.

Parts lived in kindergarten to improve a child's performance in grade school and lower the incidence of early dropout.

DepEd views the institutionalization of kindergarten as a key move in implementing the administration's flagship 6-12 (kindergarten to 12) program, which extends the basic education cycle from 10 years to 12. The program aims to produce more competent Filipino high school graduates.

The law mandates DepEd to "regulate the organization, operation and/or implementation of the kindergarten education program of both public and private schools."

It requires that "the child's mother tongue or first language (depending on location) as the official medium of instruction. The moment, kindergarten classes in Cebu will be taught in Cebuano while those in Ilocos will be taught in Ilocano.

In one moment in our time have different curriculum and textbooks for each of the 19 regions, the law also instructs DepEd to establish a new division under the Bureau of Elementary Education to oversee the implementation of the kindergarten program and ensure that its requirements are fulfilled.

Why wait for disasters to happen?

By Kristian L. Ribet

HERE HAVE for disasters when we can do something now to minimize the devastation that they could cause?

The country's chief seismologist posed the question yesterday to urge government agencies to stay of responding to crisis after they should adopt to prepare for disasters that could happen.

Renato Solidum, director of the Philippine Institute for Volcanology and Seismology, urged local governments to coordinate with DENR and to stopping and understanding their geohazard areas.

"Preventing is better than responding," he said.

The Phivolcs, he noted, had software and maps that could help local officials prepare for disasters.

"They can use these for their development plans," he explained.

Para-ties, he said, could answer such questions as "Where do you put settlements?" and "Where do you put critical facilities?"

Solidum made the remarks a week after a 6.9-magnitude earthquake hit Negros Oriental. The tremors caused a tsunami alert and affected landslides that killed nearly a hundred people living in mountain slopes.

Solidum said he believed that local governments were now more aware of geohazard risks and the need to adapt to disasters like floods and landslides in the event of typhoons and earthquakes.

For the past years, Solidum said, Phivolcs had been receiving requests from local governments for more information about geohazard maps and disaster preparedness.

In a press briefing yesterday, Solidum disclosed that Phivolcs and the government of Quezon City were finalizing a study projecting hazard areas in the city, one of the biggest and most populous in Metro Manila.

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PGA Cars

'Strictest in the world,' says US

From page A1

here in the Philippines.

"The bank secrecy laws in the Philippines are among the strictest in the world," said Bruinsbroke in a January 2005 cable (code: 05MANILA64, http://cables.mobilu.org/cable.php?id=2005), in which he related the conspicuously pointless boasting the country.

The United States is apparently particularly concerned about the Foreign Currency Deposit Act of the Philippines (FCDA), otherwise known as Republic Act No. 6426. The FCDA is a legacy of the martial law era, having been signed into law by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1974.

The FCDA makes the revelation of foreign currency deposits unlawful, except upon a written permission of the depositor.

The other law is the Bank Secrecy Law (Republic Act No. 1405) started on Sept. 9, 1955.

RA 1405 declares all deposits absolutely confidential, with the exceptions of: written consent of the depositor; in cases of impeachment; upon order of a competent court in cases of bribery or dereliction of duty of public officials; or in cases where the money deposited or invested is the subject matter of the litigation.

Romney and Fitzherbert's remarks came on the heels of a global solidarity of bank secrecy laws.

"The era of banking secrecy is over," declared members of the Group of 20 leading economies (G20) at the 2009 summit in London, as quoted by Bruinsbroke.

The global financial crisis was the catalyst for the G20 crackdown on bank secrecy that began in 2009.

In order to manage the global financial crisis and prevent future crises from reoccurring, financial sections need to promote accountability reforms, said the G20 communiqué.

The FCDA was invoked last week by the Philippine Savings Bank (PSBank) in refusing to divulge the alleged foreign currency deposits of Chief Justice Renato Corona, which the Supreme Court ordered to be revealed in impeachment proceedings under PSBank.

The Senate impeachment court voted on Monday to compel the PSBank officer-in-charge of the prosecution team opening the alleged foreign currency deposits with PSBank of the Chief Justice.

AFP corruption scandal

In the January 2001 cable, Bruinsbroke reported to Washington that the Sandiganbayan antigraft court had remained efforts to prosecute the former Armed Forces comptroller, Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, for plunder and corruption in 2000.

However, Bruinsbroke noted that the next bank secrecy law prevented the Land Bank of the Philippines (Landbank) involved in the litigation from fulfilling the court order to freeze Garcia's dollar accounts.

"The Landbank Team Cannot, even pro-domestic pesos in which the borrowed the business to effective prosecution of money laundering in the Philippines.

These are Wikileaks cables for November 2007 (cable code: 07MANILA3869, http://cables.mobilu.org/cable.php?id=13812) and March of 2008 (cable code: 08MANILA622, http://cables.mobilu.org/cable.php?id=16394).

"Investigations are hampered by Philippine banking secrecy laws that limit access to current criminal financial information, and by poor protection for would-be whistleblowers," said Romney.

The cable quoted Romney highlighted the "severe negative implications" of a ruling handed down by the Supreme Court in the case of "People of the Philippines v. Eugenio."

The deposits (08MANILA626, http://cables.mobilu.org/cable.php?id=16394) a ruling "completely took away the ability" of the Philippine Supreme Court to overturn.

"The Philippine Supreme Court has ruled that a bank account holder must be given prior notification before an inquiry can be made into their bank records during investigation of money laundering or corruption cases. Both Philippine and U.S. officials have argued this decision may be negatively affected by this decision. The Philippine Office of the Solicitor General is likely to file a motion by March 14 asking that the entire Supreme Court rehear the case."

Ownership dispute

Romney reasoned that upon hearing the news of the high court's decision in the Eugenio case, she requested the Philippine Anti-Money Laundering Council to explain the debacle.

The Eugenio case concerns a February 2006 high court ruling in a case involving the ownership of a basement in the Philippine government and the Nanco consortium that built the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 (Nata 3). The government had nullified the contract on the ground that it was attended by corruption.

The high court ruled against the next Monday Landbank General pending into the bank deals surrounding the Nata project. The high court ruled that money in accounts of secretaries, kidnapping and drug violations, bank account holders must be given prior notification before inquiry can be made into their bank records.

In her report, Romney cited the high court decision in the case filed by Philippine and US investigations to anti-corruption cases.

"Giving subjects of investigation notice of the investigations or an early stage allows opportunity for the destruction of evidence, the concealment of other assets and the intimidation of witnesses," she argued.

"It will also allow the account holder to prevent effective investigations by tying the proceedings up with litigation," it said.

Pending bills

The role of bank secrecy laws in the Corona trial has spurred some members of Congress to call for a change to the banking laws.

Sen. Ralph Recto filed Senate Resolution 711 last week seeking a review of the FDCA and RA 1405.

Recto acknowledged the concern in the financial sector that bank practices were being dragged into the politics of the impeachment trial.

"The review is not meant to de-fang (these) laws but to make certain that no one gets hurt or gets special treatment when the chaos of these laws start to pursue on its object of piety," he said.

Back in 2011, Sen. Edgardo Angara filed Senate Bill 1077 bill that would require government employees to provide the Office of the Ombudsman with written permission to look into their bank accounts if they are accused of crimes.

"We want to put in place a mechanism that protects public servants' transparency in the public sector" said Senators, adding that those who did not provide permission were "free to go to the private sector because working in the government is a privilege and not a right."

Those two Senate bills are pending at the Senate's committee on banks.

In the House of Representatives, partylist members Antonio Tinio (Alliance of Concerned Teachers, or ACT) has filed a counterpart bill that seeks to amend the FDCA by revoking the absolute confidentiality conferred upon foreign currency deposits, but only in cases involving bribery and dereliction of duty.

"These privileges granted by law to foreign currency deposits effectively place them beyond the reach of government," Tinio said.

Republic of the Philippines
Philippine National Police
National Capital Region Police Office
MANUEL M. QUEZON DISTRICT

TRAFFIC ADVISORY

On February 18 (SATURDAY) 4pm to February 19 (SUNDAY) 4pm, BEGINNING AT 4:00 A.M. SHEAD HEL BEL POSTAL HEAD will be totally CLOSED TO TRAFFIC.

On February 19 (SUNDAY) 4am - 4pm) JONES BRIDGE Northbound and Southbound lane will be totally CLOSED TO TRAFFIC.

All vehicles coming from FAIT / BURGOS intending to utilize JONES BRIDGE NORTHBOUND shall take WILSON Bridge, U.N. AVENUE/MAGALLANES Right lane QUEZON AVENUE for destination.

PLAZA intending to utilize LANTERN as turning points and MAGALLANES DRIVE for destination.

All vehicles coming from ROOSEVELT upon intending to utilize JONES BRIDGE SOUTHBOUND lane EDSA/EL, right lane of SEN. GREGG, take Mc Arthur Bridge for destination.

Private vehicles coming from QUEZON BRIDGE going to TIER, for overnight, right turn on VICTORIA ST. for destination.

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— CDA Chairman Emmanuel M. De Guzman

"The National Show of Cooperative Force aims to increase public awareness about co-operatives and their contributions to advance People, Planet, Prosperity and Peace for sustainable development. The UN declared that co-operatives are more than just money, they are actively entrepreneurs that build lives, communities, and the planet."
— FEC Chairman Agapito "Boy" Aquino

How prosecution got CJ's bank record deserves own probe

By Cathy C. Yamsuan and Michael Lim Ubac

THE STORY of how copies of Chief Justice Renato Corona's bank documents reached House prosecutors has gotten so complicated that one senator believes it now warrants its own Senate investigation.

Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV said the inquiries that Quezon City Rep. Jorge "Bolet" Banal's claim that he found copies of Corona's bank records left outside his office was now completely the "main issue" of the Chief Justice's alleged impeachable offenses and former left to the scrutiny of the Senate committee on banks, financial institutions and currencies.

Trillanes, a former opponent of the determination of the criminal culpability of prosecutors and assistants who used illegal means to obtain bank documents was outside the jurisdiction of the impeachment court, "the real question" facing the senators was whether to admit the questioned testimonies and documents when these were personally offered as evidence by the prosecutors.

Trillanes elaborated in a text message that according to his own research, "illegally acquired evidence is governed by the exclusionary rule so its admissibility?"

He said other senators agreed that Banal's story raised many questions but that they would rather hear what he had to say on Monday.

Shocked manager

Arnaldo Tongson, manager of the Philippine Savings Bank (PSBank) branch on Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City, told the impeachment court that Banal visited him in her office on Jan. 11 and sought her help in verifying a photocopy of Corona's bank records.

She said Banal, a former Quezon City councilor, even told her that he was "a congressman already," and that he was "part of the prosecution" in pursuit of Corona's bank records.

Tongson said she was shocked by the records Banal showed her than after he left, she went to the bank's vault to check if Corona's signature cards were still inside.

Both Tongson and Banal are the subject of a committee hearing and not an impeachment trial. This subject is completely off the main case," Trillanes said in a text message, adding that the impeachment court's probe focus on determining the source of the documents was "irrelevant."

"The most appropriate venue for this line of questioning is a committee hearing," he said.

Still, Trillanes said, he would not agree with "any decision that will make (Corona's) prosecutors inadmissible as evidence" just because of doubts raised on the authenticity of the documents.

It was Tongson who initially said that the copies of Corona's records presented by the prosecution "seem fake."

Let him talk

Senators Vicente Sotto III, Loren Legarda and Francis Pangilinan also said they believed that Banal should be given the chance to air his story to open court on Monday.

Banal has been "invited," to testify before the court, by Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile on a gesture of nonparliamentary courtesy.

But he told the impeachment court on Thursday that an anonymous sender left a copy of Corona's dollar accounts outside his house at St. Ignatius Village in Quezon City, and confirmed that he had shown Tongson the documents.

"I'm sorry if I caused any problem, but I just wanted to help my town," Banal said.

It was Legarda who pointed out that while Banal got the copy on Jan. 11, Malacañang Representative Ismail, a member of the prosecution, said a "small lady" gave him copies of Corona's bank records in the Senate premises on Feb. 2.

Asked yesterday if Banal's story had complicated the issue of the bank documents, Legarda said: "Let's take his word for it and let him explain on Monday."

Sotto sent a similar reply by text message: "We hope to be clarified on Monday."

Pangilinan said the origin and authenticity of the bank documents should be established immediately "so we can get back in business, so to speak, and focus on the trial proper."

Chaff from the grain

In another phone interview, Legarda said the Senate impeachment court was set to first sees the real source of the bank documents attached by the prosecution to its request for the subpoena issued by the court on Feb. 6 for Corona's bank records.

She said she and her colleagues should be able to "separate the chaff from the grain" and focus on the merit of the impeachment case, which was Corona's Romero to condone discharging his duties as Chief Justice. *With reports from TJ Burgonio and Norman Bordadora*

CJ dares P-Noy to show bank records

From page A1

billing college students to make a judgment without knowing the facts of the case.

Corona challenged Mr. Aquino to disclose what he has found out and also his psychological records. "Maybe it would be better if you also make public Mr. President, your SALN (statement of assets, liabilities and net worth) and explain it to the people. Maybe you should also include your bank accounts and psychological records, which I have been advised are all issues the have an obligation to show the people that we are of sound mind."

He said he had come out with his own SALN. "I've led hiding it. Its nondisclosure is in accordance with the policy outlined by the Supreme Court two decades ago, when I was not yet a magistrate. I will explain my SALN when this time or opportunity comes, in accordance with the impeachment proceedings."

'Shut up'

The Chief Justice issued the statement in Filipino as a means to reply to Mr. Aquino's speech at De La Consolacion College in Manila on Thursday, wherein he said Corona was no longer to be trusted for failing to fully disclose his bank deposits.

Said Corona: "I am calling on our President not to interfere in, pressure and influence the Senate impeachment court. There is a process in the impeachment proceedings and these are stated in our Constitution and the rules of the Senate. Aquino should not only obey this, but uphold and respect it to the utmost."

"Let us not move away from the process of this impeachment court and make judgment via the media. Let us allow the court to proceed in accordance with the law and due process.

"Like what you said, it's better to you: 'observe and shut up first.'" the Chief Justice said.

In the President's remark that the lengthy legal discussions in the trial appeared to be aimed at confusing the public and causing it to lose interest in the proceedings, Corona retorted: "We don't have anybody to blame there but your prosecutors who came out with a fake list of my properties and a falsified bank document. Who is really deceiving the people?"

He said that instead of taking on "the duty of the Senate impeachment court," the President should "find solutions to the worsening poverty and the hunger of many of our countrymen, the relentless increase of the prices of gasoline and power commodities, the continuous demolition of the homes of the poor and the slow response to victims of calamities he might about by nature."

'Give me a chance'

The Chief Justice likewise chided the President for supposedly trying to persuade the Commission on Elections to make a judgment against him without knowing "the whole truth [and] when only one side has been heard."

"In this the 'judgment' and 'fair play' that you're teaching to the young? Give me a chance to give my side, present evidence, answer your baseless accusations, and present the truth. This is a real justice and no inaccordance with our Constitution," he said.

Corona also said: "Today less 20 diehard lawyers serving for free against the 188 congressmen and more or less 60 private prosecutors employed from the country's coffers. Is this right? Add to this the Bureau of Internal Revenue and Land Transportation Office commissioners, Land Registration Authority administrator, Registers of Deeds, bureau of immigration commissioner and other officials of the government and civil servants who were ordered to find fault in me and my entire family.

"You are employing the full force of the government on that I and my entire family are persecuted and oppressed. Is this a fair fight? And the struggle path?"

Absentee voters' listing at Naia

OVERSEAS Filipino workers (OFWs) may now register at the airport as absentee voters before leaving the country to enable them to vote in the 2013 elections.

The Commission on Elections, Department of Foreign Affairs-Overseas Absentee Voting Secretariat and Manila International Airport Authority on Friday signed a memorandum of agreement to establish a field registration center at the country's premier airport to allow OFWs to register before their departure.

Tina G. Santos

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Maternal deaths rising in Metro

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE DEPARTMENT of Health (DoH) yesterday expressed alarm over the rising number of maternal deaths in Metro Manila due to bleeding or maternal hemorrhage.

In January alone, 54 maternal deaths were recorded in the capital, according to Dr. Eduardo Janiola, director of the DOH Center for Health Development in the National Capital Region.

A partial report from the Regional Surveillance and Epidemiology Unit showed that most of these cases were from Pasig City accounting for 11 deaths; Makati, 10; Valenzuela, 8, and San Pablo, 5. Four maternal deaths were each reported in the cities of Parañaque and Pasay and two deaths each in Navotas and Muntinlupa.

Maternal mortality refers to deaths caused by pregnancy or childbirth complications arising from infection, hemorrhage or bleeding, hypertension disorders, obstructed labor and unsafe abortion. This happens within 42 days of giving birth, according to the health agency.

In 2010, among the top causes of maternal deaths in Metro Manila were eclampsia or convulsions after giving birth (41 percent), hemorrhage (10 percent), medical complication (17 percent) and infection (7 percent).

Janiola yesterday stressed the need to immediately address the prevalence of maternal deaths by providing immediate and sufficient treatment, particularly safe blood facilities and services for pregnant women.

Janiola also underscored the need for skilled birthing attendants to efficiently respond to risky maternal deliveries.

Bishops welcome grand RH debate

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE CATHOLIC Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) yesterday welcomed reservations from Congress to a grand debate to thresh out issues and enlighten the people further on the controversial reproductive health (RH) bill.

CBCP president Lipa Archbishop Jose Palma said the Catholic bishops were always "eager and willing to engage" in an endeavor that would help people make guided decisions, particularly on issues affecting morality and values about love, marriage and family.

"As we always say, we are more than eager and willing to engage in an endeavor of making people enlightened... (so) a debate should be (in order) on," Palma said even as Church-run Radio Veritas reported.

Solon's call

Palma was responding to a call made by Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, one of the chief proponents of the family-planning measure who said it had lamentedly decided have more "enlightening sessions" with the Catholic bishops on the issue.

Lagman made the invitation after newly installed Manila Archbishop Luis Antonio Tagle expressed on Monday openness to ecumenic dialogues with Malacañang, which never hailed it last year.

The lawmaker had suggested that the grand debate on the bill, still undergoing plenary discussions in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, can be carried out separately or jointly with representatives from Malacañang.

The CBCP president said the Church leaders is amenable to either a debate or a dialogue and, should it push through, Catholic bishops would urge lay people to do some of the talking especially "on the dynamics of childbearing."

While the bishops would talk about the moral dimensions of the issue, it would ask lay people to talk about maternal health and childbearing in the proposed debate "because that is not our expertise," admitted Palma.

"It is important that we include the lay community [in the debate] because the life of women and children are basically involved," added the senior prelate.

'Search for truth'

Like Tagle, the CBCP president also hoped that the proposed grand debate and the "search for truth" on the RH bill, which espouses free access of condoms and other artificial contraceptives would be conducted with sincerity.

Lagman's proposal was also agreeable to Lipa Archbishop Ramon Arguelles.

"But we will need lay people to (in the debate) because if we are to face the lawmakers, they would again question our authority over the issues because we are not married," said Arguelles also over Radio Veritas.

For his part, Novaliches Bishop Emeritus Teodoro Bacani said a debate is a "very well-regulated" debate will be good for both the Catholic Church and the government.

But he believed that Lagman's invitation for a grand debate on the family-planning measure was just a means to revive public interest on the measure. "The bill fell at already a dead ball," said Bacani.

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Across the NATION

Small miners defy gov't order, open gold tunnels in Compostela Valley

DAVAO CITY—Small-scale miners, which supports the small-scale miners, said the tunnels opened were far from Mts Dot Uno, site of January's deadly slides that killed 36 people—including children.

The government has declared a no-habitation policy on landslide-prone areas of Pantukan, including Napnapan, after the slides. This resulted in the closure of several gold tunnels there.

Barbero Demecillo, one of the defiant small-scale miners, said at least 11 tunnels had been reopened starting 10 a.m. on Wednesday amid increased risks.

He said they decided to do so because their families had become hungry.

"Our troubles are going hungry. It's becoming unbearable," Demecillo said in a text message to the Inquirer.

He said they could not wait for the pledge of livelihood that the government made when the tunnels were closed.

"We cannot just sit here and watch our family starve," Barbero said.

Reminded about the dangers of slides in Napnapan, as the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) warned of, Barbero said what they recognized were hazards "safe enough" to dig in.

"We did not open tunnels close to Mont Uno and those near landslides," he said.

Mont Uno was the site of the deadly slides.

When the no-habitation policy was issued in the aftermath of the slides, many miners stayed in Napnapan.

On Wednesday, a government demolition team was supposed to tear down more shanties to prevent people from living there but some prevented them from climbing up the foreclosed mining area, Gallero said.

The people in Mts Dot Sto. Niño community facing Dot Uno, land prepared to build a human barricade on Wednesday to prevent the government demolition team from carrying out the mayor's order to dismantle their houses but they did not come, she said.

Bismark said that instead of the human barricade, the solution decided to open their tunnels. —Bernadine Lacorte, *Inquirer Mindanao*

Capiz town orders power firm closure

By Felipe V. Cobus, *Inquirer Visayas*

ROXAS CITY—The Panitan municipal government on Thursday ordered the temporary closure of a power generation facility that leaked oil into a creek that leads to the province's main water source.

The Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources confirmed the oil leak.

The oil leak started on Feb 1. But when an initial inspection was conducted by environment officials, there were still traces of the oil leak.

Bids said the closure was without prejudice to the final recommendation of the EMB in Western Visayas, which would be discussed in a meeting on Monday in Iloilo City.

PAEC, a power generation company supplies 3.5 megawatts of power to the Capiz Electric Cooperative (Capelco), the lone distributor of power in Roxas City and the province.

Edgar Dias, Capelco ground manager, said the shutdown would not greatly affect their operations since the bulk of power came from the Green Core, the Pinoy Energy Development Corp. and the Philippine Electricity Trade Market.

Tanauc village chief Liberato Degorio Jr. has told the provincial board in a report that the fuel emitted foul odor and had spread to the nearby rice field and the canal leading to Tapaz Creek, which also leads to the Panay River, the main water source of Iloilo Water Water District (IWWD).

The oil spill alarmed the residents because they feared it might affect their livelihood and contaminate the Panay River, said Degorio.

Dennis Molina Jr., Capiz provincial environment and natural resources officer, has confirmed that the oil spill threatened to contaminate the Panay River.

The IWWD's water treatment plant is located in Barangay Ilaya, Jaro, Iloilo, some 2 kilometers away from the RSCI plant.

Molina said environment specialist Marlon Bonato to oversee the operation to contain the oil spill. Mitigating measures have been applied such as trapping the oil spill with the use of rice husk and bamboo slats, he added.

Reyan Ganna, EEGI management consultant and engineer, said on Tuesday that 150 liters of bunker fuel were the leaked from the boilers of the plant.

Davao to ban entry of GMOs

DAVAO CITY—After doubling the growing of genetically modified plants alongside organic crops, including the experimental cultures of the so-called Frankenstein varieties, the city council has enacted a law to keep genetically modified organisms out of the city.

The move was hailed by local anti-GMO (genetically modified organisms) groups. While the local Organic Agriculture Ordinance explicitly said that organic crops cannot coexist with genetically modified crops, we still need to protect our agricultural biodiversity from future attempts to plant GMO crops in the city," Tina Desuta of the group Sustainable Integrated Area Development Initiatives in Mindanao (Siadmin) engineer for Asian Reform and Regional Development, said of the proposed ordinance.

Under the proposed ordinance, now the subject of public consultations, being conducted by the city council, the importation of GMOs into to be outlawed.

Its provisions, however, allow planting, growing, selling and trading (seeds) not be allowed, Councilor Benjamin Alvarado said of the proposed ordinance recently passed by Councilor Pilar Braga.

Ito Organic Director Dilg, a network of organic farming practitioners and their supporters, said the approval of the proposed ordinance would modify that down the city from GMOs.

It was also timely the group said, as there had been recent attempts to revive field testing of GMOs at the University of the Philippines' (UP) Mindanao campus here.

The field tests were halted in 2010 when Mayor Sara Duterte ordered genetically modified eggplant seedlings being grown at the UP Mindanao campus uprooted amid protests by anti-GMO groups led by Go Organic Director Dilg.

If the ordinance banning GMOs even approved, it would allow the city to tap the growing demand for organic products for domestic and international markets, said Ling Gaano, policy advocacy officer of the Initiatives Development Foundation.

The market for organic products has been expanding at 10 to 30 per cent per year, she said. "Davao City, which is branding itself as Green Davao, can easily tap this market," she added.

The reasoning that no GMO crops will contaminate agricultural fields in the future, not only can we ensure our food security but also the healthy quality of our product," she said. —Jeremaine Lasaeta, *Inquirer Mindanao*

MOUNT BANAHAW will be closed from trekkers for the next three years.

Banahaw, San Cristobal mountains closed to trekkers till 2015

By Dellie T. Maliwanag, *Inquirer Southern Luzon*

DOLORES, Quezon—The Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) for Mounts Banahaw and San Cristobal has declared the two mountains as will off limits to trekkers for the next three years.

In a meeting on Thursday, the PAMB ruled by the government to monitor state-declared protected areas adopted the recommendation by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB) to extend the closure of the mountains until Feb. 16, 2015.

"Our collective decision is for the benefit of Mounts Banahaw and San Cristobal. The place is not yet ready for public utilization. We have to protect and sustain the gains from in past closure," Rafael Dungo, DENR-Protected Area Superintendent for Mounts Banahaw-San Cristobal, said in an interview after the meeting.

The two mountains span 11,133.80 hectares including several towns of Quezon and Laguna were declared protected under Republic Act No. 9847 by then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on Dec. 11, 2009.

Mt. Banahaw, which used to be visited by about half a million people during the Holy Week, was ended off to the public since 2004 to construct the mountain to prevent damaged by slash-and-burn farming and the irresponsible conduct of mountaineers, religious pilgrims and nature enthusiasts who attended the place with their trash. So it was the reason was supposed to have ended on Jan. 29, 2012.

For the coming Holy Week, the PAMB will also promulgate restriction for religious devotees and culture entertainers who usually troop to Kinabuhayan to pray and camp out at the allowed areas.

She said campers, religious pilgrims and tourists would be assigned in two separate areas. "The campers will also be required to pay a certain fee before they can be allowed to put up their tents," Dungo said.

A study of the ERDB shows that the camping site, worship areas and the numerous healing places for devotees to the "sacred" rivers in the village had already exceeded their carrying capacities.

NEWSBRIEFS

■ KORONADAL CITY

5 killed in collision

AT LEAST five people were killed while three others were injured when a bus carrier truck collided with another cargo truck in Polomolok on Tupi-South Cotabato on Friday, one of the survivors recounted during an interview by a radio station here.

Dionisio Bonto said the seaman other companions were on the bus carrier truck driven by Rector Lanchapar, which was heading for General Santos City.

He said Lanchapar succumbed to the impact while four people on the other cargo truck, whose identities were still being determined, died. —*Jeffrey Malac, Inquirer Mindanao*

■ GENERAL SANTOS CITY

Worker abducted

ONE construction union man abducted a Korean plantation worker here in for non-hauling for work on Tuesday, the police said on Friday.

SPO1 Lansang Mansiol, investigator of the Philippine National Police, said Mohammad Manamsal, 24, a resident of Barangay Bitinon-ang, was riding a motorcycle driven by his older Magsino when abducted by the armed men riding in a van that had no license plates.

Magsino later told police that the armed men forced him to keep driving them to stop. The man, armed with M-16 rifles, took Kiamporpot with another stolen bike before attaching him to his car, he said. —*Jayden Tyson, Inquirer Mindanao*

■ CAMARINES NORTE

Small-scale miner killed

A GOLD miner in Barangay Sta. Rosa North of Jose Panganiban town died after falling into a mining pit on Wednesday.

Police identified the dead Jerry Bajit Jonathan Espalmil and Ritchie Morales, 34, was digging on a tunnel near the mining pit when he heard a 20-meter hole collapsed to a certain Marco Antonio. Morales succumbed to multiple head and body injuries, said Espalmil.

—*Jason C. Gallos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

■ LAGUNA

Teacher slain

A PUBLIC school teacher was found dead in a vacant lot in Victoria town on Friday.

Antonina Lising, 37, was on special assignments in her home village of Nanhi, found her remains in Barangay Banlic at around 8:40 a.m., said town police chief Senior Insp. Alex Dela Rosa.

Manager said the killing was last night by two men who left her home in Barangay San Roque at around 8 p.m. he said. But the Bachelor's degree holder in Elementary School in Sta. Rosa City.

Police said the motive behind the missing of the forty-six found.

—*Melvin Gascon, Inquirer S. Luzon*

BCDA sends own security in John Hay

BAGUIO CITY—The squabbles affecting Camp John Hay have been taken several odd turns this week.

On Thursday, the state agency governing the former American rest and recreation area announced the security agency hired by the John Hay developer of operating the resort is a debt. Said that has been going on for 13 years now.

Arnel Paciano Casanova, president of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA), said the agency would deploy its own security personnel to curb squabbling at Camp John Hay.

Casanova, who was here on Friday for a media tour, directed the Philippine Economic and Investigations Agency (Pneda) to disconnect what he described as "unreliable communication [and] incidents situation within the John Hay Special Economic Zone" where security personnel allegedly reside with Ilocos front, check dogs and their chickens without BCDA's consent.

Wahiki it has been hired by the Philippine-owned Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CDH) hired to secure the leased John Hay properties. CDH owes has sought arbitration after BCDA declared of payments amounting to P1 billion in rentals.

Alfredo Filgueira III, CDH's executive vice president and chief operating officer, said the firm "will not illegally" this issue struck against it.

Last month, however, Villagers obtained a temporary restraining order against BCDA from a Baguio regional trial court to prevent an alleged government takeover plan of the John Hay development area.

He claimed that over 200 security personnel hired by BCDA had massed up at a hotel on Mascot Highway last month, supposedly to secure the takeover.

Casanova denied the allegations.

In a statement, he said the government chartered CDH owes and "finished the construction of almost all the unfinished buildings" in January following them of their violations, specifically Section 311 of the National Building Code for Presidential Decree No. 1096) which states that "no person, firm or corporation, including agency or instrumentality of the government, shall erect, construct, alter, repair, move, convert or demolish any building or structure, or cause the same to be done without first obtaining a building permit."

The government company running Camp John Hay is also dealing with its own issues.

On Friday, employees of the John Hay Management Corp. (JHMC), BCDA's estate manager, claimed that evidences against their president had been stolen.

These employees complained to President Aquino and Ombudsman Conchita Carpio-Morales last year that JHMC President Jamie Rhett Ayog-ong, allegedly misused company funds.

Lawyer Nelson Goyo, the employees' counsel, said "total payout of evidence against Ayog-ong had been given missing. Only the JHMC finance director [is left]."

Goyo said the employees were severely threatened after serving a few days of suspension mandated allegedly by the JHMC management. Heaned Gobenac, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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Model reading center drops 'bodega' look

By Cris Evert B. Lizo, Cebu City

MARCIANA Tudtud knee knows exactly how a library looks like. But when the former librarian first stepped into the reading center of Barangay Talamban in Cebu City, the saw a gloomy looking (storehouse) stacked with secondhand, almost unusable, books.

"I was moved when I saw the situation. So I volunteered to help out. We have to do it even if I was not anymore connected to any school," said Inoc, 45.

In this age of information technology and social media, she said it was hard to look for a librarian. Volunteering in the reading center is her way of sharing her abilities and skills.

Book donation drive

Inoc, together with the reading center's librarian-designate Nise Berenice Cedeno and the barangay council, launched a campaign to solicit book donations from individuals and institutions.

They asked priests and lay ministers in Catholic churches in Talamban to announce their drive. They also sought assistance from the Cebu City Public Library.

The effort paid off. Barangay residents and other donors, such as the University of San Carlos, responded.

In July last year, the reading center was established. Six months later, its mini-library became fully operational. Now, it serves as a model among the 64 barangay readings centers in the city, according to Rosario Uban, chief librarian of the city's public library.

Under Republic Act No. 7743, reading centers must be established from the congressional to the barangay levels throughout the country. Each has a librarian designate.

Read-along session

Of the 80 barangays in Cebu City, 64 have reading centers, Uban said. The librarian-designates were trained on basic management of mini-libraries in November last year.

On Jan. 28, the bayanis held a read-along session at the Talamban reading center. The event was co-organized by the Cebu City Public Library.

Miss Cebu 2012 first runner-up Rachel Chloe Sulang led second runner-up Hershey Barangay served as storytellers to 35 children. The two are mass communication graduates of the University of the Philippines Cebu College.

Emphasizing the importance of looking at a person's inner beauty than outside appearance, Sulang read "Beshalter Brehbel," a story about a little girl who thought that her old neighbor is a witch. The book was written by Dayang Sinaggio.

"Teaching children the importance of not judging people because of their physical appearance is very relevant during this time when people have stereotypes," Sulang said.

Children were provided copies of the book so they could join the reading.

Lilay's world

Santiago took the children to the world of Lilay, a rainbill girl who helped in bringing back water to her barangay. The water isn't because the people wasted it. "Lilay" was written by Becky Bravo and illustrated by Bernard Anon.

Apart from teaching the children the value of water, Santiago told the children that they could do something to help society even if they were young.

Librarian-designate Cedeno welcomed the read-along session to further encourage public support for libraries.

Now that they have established a model reading center, they intend to help other barangays build better reading centers and promote the culture of reading.

RACHEL Chloe Sulang, Miss Cebu 2012 2nd runner-up, stresses the importance of a person's inner beauty during the Inquirer Read-Along session at the reading center in Barangay Talamban in Cebu City.

Under Republic Act No. 7743, reading centers must be established throughout the country

Thirty-nine years ago, the late Dr. Victor R. Potenciano started a dream of compassionately helping the poor and middle class members of society through establishing an institution that offers genuine health and medical care.

Through the years, this legacy has continued. It was lovingly passed on not only to his devoted family but extended to the loyal and dedicated physicians and staff who have shared the same vision and mission as that of the founder.

From the then Polomolok General Hospital to today's VRP Medical Center, nothing has changed. Except for its continuous pursuit to be the best hospital that cares.

And to commemorate its 39th anniversary, the whole VRP Medical Center and family and its friends are invited as the week-long event kicks off with a dinner, fashion show, and concert dubbed "Love is Blind" that is on February 16, 2012, Saturday, 6pm at the Linhak Reception Center, Pang City.

One of the country's finest singer and songwriter Mr. Basil Valdez will serenade audience with his timeless classics as he did in Fort Living back in 1986. The fundraising concert is a joint project of VRP Medical Center and the VRP Medical Staff Organization in which proceeds will all go to the Operation Balomolok Surrogate Foundation.

On the February 20, the modern facilities and units will be showcased and will be the hospital's newest offering to its patients. These renovated units within the hospital like the Intensive Care Unit, Operating Room, and service elevator while new units will be presented such as the Coronary Care Unit, Intermediate Care Unit, Pediatric Intensive Unit, and Stroke Unit, among others, a thanksgiving Mass will follow.

As part of VRP Medical Center's social commitment, an indigent beneficiary endorsed by Mandaluyong Mayor Benjamin C. Abalos, Jr. will be the first indigent patient of the hospital's new birth site. This will be another milestone in the medical history of VRP Medical Center.

As part of the hospital's traditions, a Blood Donation will also be held as well the annual HIV Talk on the 23rd, Nutrimeals on the 24th, the Dr. Alberto Caoibe Research Paper and Case Presentation Contest will be conducted following the graduation of residents and fellows.

VRP Medical Center's loyal employees will be honored also to yearly employees' awarding on February 24 at 8am in the VRP Hall, Physician's Building. VRP Medical Center shows its appreciation to employees of notable contributions.

VRP Medical Center is baby-friendly hospital recognized by the Department of Health, is a private, tertiary hospital and standby Philhealth as a "Center of Excellence." It is also an ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management System, ISO 14001:2004 Environment Management System, and OHSAS 18001:2007 Occupational Health and Safety certified institution.

Mr. Jose Albert Chan will be featured in VRP Medical Center's Source Minute Part 2.

IN THE KNOW

REPUBLIC Act No. 7743, which provides for the establishment of congressional, city and municipal libraries and barangay reading centers across the country, was signed in June 1994.

It provides for the establishment of additional public libraries as a joint undertaking of the National Library and the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

All public libraries and barangay reading centers are to make available reading materials, including those prescribed by the Department of Education and national newspapers, and may be used as centers for audio-visual presentations and other kinds of educational activities.

Source: RA No. 7743

MOVEMENT ITO AID

Students of Movement ITO led by Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. (2nd from left) and Deputy Speaker Shirley Agrupis (3rd from left) join Speaker Belmonte's son Edmund (4th from left) and Movement ITO's Secretary General Sonny Belmonte (5th from left) in donating P1 million to the victims of the recent magnitude 6.9 earthquake that struck the Visayas and other parts of the country. Movement ITO is the newly formed bloc in the House of Representatives comprising the 188 legislators who voted to oust Chief Justice Renato Corona. In photo with Belmonte and Edmund at the Speaker's Office are (left to right) Representatives Mohammad Khalid Dimaporo (Lone District, Lanao del Norte), Edcel Lagman (1st District, Albay), Teodoro Casiño (Bayan Muna), Neri Colmenares (Bagong Alyansang Makabayan), Rodolfo Fariñas (1st District, Ilocos Norte), Ma. Lourdes Acharon (Lone District, Romblon), Ma. Lourdes Aquino-Oreta (Lone District, Northern Samar), Ma. Lourdes Bautista (Lone District, Davao del Norte), Ma. Lourdes Bautista (Lone District, Davao del Norte), Ma. Lourdes Bautista (Lone District, Davao del Norte

Safe haven for Philippine ducks

By Kristine L. Alave

THE NATIVE ducks are not lame ducks anymore.

The Philippine duck, Anas Luzonica, has found safe haven in Cabagan, Isabela, after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources declared the Malasi Tree Park and Wildlife Sanctuary there as a "critical habitat" for the birds.

The designation of the critical habitat is in accordance with Republic Act (RA) No. 9147, also known as the Philippine Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

"This is a major step in conserve and protect the Philippine duck as the area becomes now a protected area, which means that the communities around it should make an effort to minimize human activities that will have adverse impact to the animal," Environment Secretary Ramon Paje said.

The Philippine duck is known as "the tropical version of the mallard," a type of duck commonly found in more temperate regions, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the population of the Philippine duck is dwindling. It has classified the fowl as "vulnerable" under its Red List of Threatened Species.

The 176-hectare Malasi area is popular among bird watchers as it is a known sanctuary for various species of ducks, herons and other migrant birds. It has also been found to support a significant population of the Philippine duck.

The Malasi Park is the second area declared as sanctuary for the ducks, which are endemic to the Philippines. In September 2011, the DENR announced that the 27-hectare wetland area in Cabasan, Camarines Sur, as a critical habitat for the fowls.

Critical habitats are areas preserved to support the existence of a certain plant or animal species, whether they are migratory or optimally occurring in an area.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

'In due course'

THREE WEEKS into the impeachment trial of Chief Justice Renato Corona, an more evidence of enormous sums of money in the Chief Justice's name across various bank accounts has come to light despite the pesonate efforts of his defense team to prevent their disclosure. Corona's lawyers have repeatedly assured the public that there is nothing irregular about these huge amounts, that some rational explanation is forthcoming about their glaring non-conclusion in Corona's SALNs, and that everyone should be patient because that definitive explanation—along with the contents of Corona's dollar accounts which have been sealed by a Supreme Court TRO—will be presented to the public "in due course." No specific date so far as to when that due course is, but Corona's lawyers say that, other than being patient, the country needs to trust them at their word.

EDITORIAL

This is clear, unmistakable, seems to be singing a different tune. Where before Corona had chosen to personally appear at the opening of the trial to proclaim his innocence and affirm that he was ready to disprove every single charge against him, lately he appears to have abandoned even the merest pretense that he still recognizes the legitimacy of the court and the persons lodged against him. Not only did his lawyer file a petition before the Supreme Court asking that the impeachment trial be quashed. Lee Monteiro he also came out with a statement that blamed President Aquino for his alleged campaign to rig the trial by bribing the senator-judges to the tune of P100 million each ("Clearly... an impeachable offense," charged Corona) and announced his belief that the President was secretly getting both at him for the high court's adverse decision on Hacienda Luisita. In his own words: "Ang impeachment trial na ito ay isang kasoal, isang pagbibigayan ng sakdalan at kalipat-kipong tanghas na pilit gi-in ang pagbubulgar ng kapuso sa Hacienda Luisita."

How Corona can imagine himself swaying us and remaining effective in the country's highest magistrature, the supposed avatar of judicial wisdom and sober-minded sense, after such an unhinged-sounding outburst is anyone's guess. Those words, however, aren't even the most striking part of his statement. That had to do with his transmultiplying assets—or, rather, as allusion to them, because that would all the Chief Justice could be bothered to do when he isn't explained them away by virtue of family wealth. "My wife and I have been privileged to come from families of comfortable means," he said. "We have lived simple and frugal lives since we got married more than 40 years ago, in the guise of thriftiness. This contributed to how we have been able to accumulate these assets."

The Chief Justice is talking the public for fools. The breadth of his possessions is not the only issue, it is also the fact that he failed to include these in his SALNs. His only years, he'd reportedly own the assets, despite those discrepancies being sworn instruments, and despite his own years having ruled in at least two instances that lower-level government functionaries deserved jail time for even minor discrepancies and omissions in their SALNs. The only time Corona's understollen peso deposit and posh properties become relevant to the question of his fitness for his august office was when his own SALNs showed he had a tendency to hide, shade over and fudge the extent of his properties.

That capacity to dissemble—okay, to lie—where his very office demands the highest standards of servitude, integrity and respectability from its occupant is what is at issue, but Corona's incumbency per se of his possessions. That distinction becomes even more crucial now that Philhealth's officers have revealed two more multimillion-peso accounts under Corona's name apart from the previously identified ones totaling some P20 million, and another Bank of the Philippine Islands account of P92 million—while Corona's SALN for December 2010 only indicated P5.5 million in assets. Two of these newly disclosed accounts Corona had terminated on Dec. 12, 2011, on the same day he was impeached by the House of Representatives.

Another day, another revelation of undeclared assets. Will Corona finally talk about them? We are betting we won't. Then, by his refusal until now to account for his wealth vis-à-vis his SALNs, by choosing to run to his point at the Supreme Court rather than simply open his dollar deposits if indeed he had nothing to hide, Corona has only to blame but himself for the abysmal regard much of the public has for his honesty and fealty to the truth. "In due course" just won't cut it.

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Matching standards

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"Many of us are puzzled," layman columnist Carlos Fidela wrote. "This [is] an embarrassment, national" for the President. By contrast, crack record and policy. Pillay supports transparency. "Sin, for us, is not a moral failure. It is a simple sense to know the real reason for the omission.... One can only hope it's not an ominous sign that mission of transparency are joining some hardway in the new leadership."

Three years were widely shared by the press, which has persistently asked this question: the President endorsed an FOI draft bill—finally.

The "draw the way for the long-overdue passage of the FOI bill," said the press coalition, spearheaded by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism. "We believe that there is no ambiguity in the executive branch, namely Budget Secretary Florencio 'Butch' Abad and Information and Communications Minister Ramon Jacinto [Sabio] secretary Ahmad]."

If passed, the FOI bill will adopt a uniform speedy procedure for people's access to information. It also removes the veils sluggish restrictions on dissemination of government information under current laws." The bill "frees the broadest amount of non-sensitive information to... everyday needs of citizens" who avail of public services.

In addition, the bill changes limits on exceptions to release of sensitive information. It shifts to government the burden of proving exceptions. Each exclusion "must be strictly construed," so they may not be used to cover up crime.

The measure also lifts "documents of high public interest" shall not be limited to "matters of public concern." Those would include the SALNs, often very difficult to access, as the Centex trial shows. Various mechanisms to widen access of information are proposed. New provisions for hefty penalties are included.

"There will be continuing challenges that will have to be fought" even if the bill is passed. "This is the struggle against abuse of discretion, against untimely exceptions, under Malacañang interference."

The press coalition's statement Mr. Aquino's signaling of Memorandum Circular 78. This Aug. 14, 1964 guideline classifies executive documents into top secret, secret, confidential, and restricted. "MC 78 is overboard," the press group added.

Almost all government officials would use power to classify "Heads of departments have the authority to classify information as top secret or secret." Worse, they may delegate that power to fetch out. "For confidential and restricted matters, any officers is authorized to classify such classified items.

"Information that may be classified under MC 78 is practically unlimited. Documents merely include "minor governmental projects..." Confidential matters need not involve matters of national security. Even routinely "matters of mere personal interest may be classified." Restricted include matters vaguely defined as "requiring special protection."

Section 6 (a) of the bill, and hinders the President to issue an executive order preempting new classification guidelines. "What is left is the task of drawing a reasonable definition and scope of [national security]."

"We are mindful since, not by our recollection of the past, but by the responsibilities for the future," George Bernard Shaw professor. What is the ends of today's journalists—many of them, however, young and well-educated—do not—allow the FOI to get on the fast track?

It is to stretch the broad freedoms granted with higher standards of competence and responsibility, are suggests. These help create an atmosphere of relevant reporting from a plurality of voices. "Deep calls unto deep," the Bible declares.

Email: juan_mercado77@yahoo.com

P-Noy resorting to demagoguery?

GET REAL

Yuliza Collas-Monsod

IF PRESIDENT Aquino actually believes that his campaign against corruption will stand or fall on the conviction or acquittal of Chief Justice Renato Corona by the impeachment court, then one can only conclude that Ellen's campaign plan must have been left behind on the train, and in that he wasn't really serious about it.

Why do I say that? Please excuse the use of P-Noy's slogan: "Social Contract with the Filipino People," which went "From a President who tolerates corruption to a President who is the nation's first and most determined fighter of corruption." The school plan accompanying this first point comprises 12 items—from "appointments, upon assumption to office, of heads of all executive departments to have their SALNs "available to the public [upon] request [and] to harmonize [and] to publicize all public offices' [publications so far] ... actually started]; to requiring the republication of the executive department

Poverty thresholds and family size

SOCIAL CLIMATE

Mahar Mangahas

AS EARLIER piece ("Poverty fell in 2011 Q4," inquirer.net, 1/28/2012) pointed out that the quarterly 2015 poverty surveys also ask the household head of each poor family for the minimum monthly peso budget for home expenses needed in order not to feel that the family is poor. "Home expenses" are explained by the interviewer to be the respondent as excluding such work-related expenses, like commuting to work by the household's earners.

The answers, called the self-rated poverty threshold, is given after the household head has already rated the family as poor, and thus has reflecting on the poverty status of the household. It might even reflect the family's needs.

Almost all the answers are round numbers, in thousands of pesos; most people don't state their needs in hundreds of pesos any more. Incidentally, households that do not self-rate as poor are also asked what they think a poor family, of the same size as theirs, needs so as not to be poor. I will pursue their very interesting answers at another time.)

Like self-rated poverty itself, this threshold varies across households, areas, and points in time. The earlier column reported the national median (one-half-rated above, one-half-rated below) of the poor at P8,000 per month, per household, in 2011. This comes from the pooled sample of 4,800 households surveyed nationwide by SWS in the four quarters of 2011.

The column also reported median thresholds for the poor of P7,000 in the National Capital Region (NCR), P7,500 in the Balance of Luzon, P6,000 in the Visayas, and P6,000 in Mindanao, in 2011. These figures reflect the relatively high cost of living in NCR, the relatively low cost of living in Mindanao, and the middling cost of living elsewhere.

Poverty thresholds by household size. Like last week, let us ask again the deceptive SS (extra small, 1-2 persons), S (small, 3-4 persons), M (medium, 5-6 persons), L (large, 7-8 persons), and XL (extra large, five more persons).

Estimates of two-person equivalents at the 2nd Philippine Conference Workshop on Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTBB-LE) in Iloilo City which started last Feb. 16 and ends today. The other speaker was the esteemed Dr. Dionisio Ramos of Ateneo de Davao University, whose incisive thoughts on education I will comment on later.

Before the gathering, I presented my critique of the K+12 program that the government is implementing in June 2012. While I do recognize that our 10-year education cycle is one of the shortest in the world (the rest of the world has a 12-year cycle), the education authorities have been leading the public by extending the education cycle by two years.

Deemphasizing the curriculum and altering its content to suit the needs of business will not be enough to easy public opinion to support such an extension. The shift in the medium of instruction and phasing out of the Filipino language (FL) of the country provides a more compelling driver to make K+12 unattainable.

Based on the change in the philosophy of learning, I called for the complete overhaul of the reading based around language bias of the current curriculum by moving away from judging children's ability to read on the basis of acquisition of English and Filipino, and underscoring the goal of basic education as learning to read, speak, write and think on academic topics in the FL. This also means purging the curriculum of foreign stereotypes and examples (e.g., igloo, little red riding hood) and replacing them with the indigenous and culturally appropriate knowledge of our language and culture.

Of course, there is a need to learn a language of wider communication like English, in addition to the home language, but never at its expense.

The likelihood of dropping out of school increases when children are forced to learn in the language they cannot understand. Still literacy does not accrue to children if they do not know the language of literacy well. A clear picture of what they have learned cannot be gained if school assessments are conducted in a language they are not familiar with.

While research continues to pile up in favor of mother tongue-based instruction, the number of primary aged children who have minimal or no access to L1-education continues to grow. Today, the estimates stand at 1.6 billion, or roughly 40 percent of the world's population.

On the other hand, Unesco evaluations that although language myths (e.g., "the more dominant language, the better," "the earlier, the better") continue to abound, the policy climate in Southeast Asia regarding non-dominant languages (NDL) is improving.

Ramos classified the MLE policy in these countries into: (a) enabling policy practices (Brunei, Laos, Burma [Myanmar] and Singapore); (b) enabling policy, little implementation (Indonesia, Malaysia, Timor Leste and Vietnam); (c) some policy support and some action (Cambodia and Thailand); and (d) strong policy support and some action (the Philippines).

His description of the Philippine situation may have been brought about by the fact that in 2009, our country transitioned from L1 use in formal and non-formal education, even if this is up to Grade 3 only. This is what is called a short-exit program in contrast to the long-exit programs I am proposing.

Ramos likewise made the following observations: (a) Valuation for all" goals in Asian countries will not be met without massive expansion of quality MLE. (b) The biggest challenge is a misunderstanding of L1 learning and the lack of political will for change. (c) Language and culture, and (c) there is an ideal approach to (c) based MLE which consists of progression and bridging between languages in the long term, and the lifelong learning of the L1.

Throughout the conference, I could sense a profound change in the attitudes of educators regarding the need to address the issues that the issue to them is increasingly becoming apparent of "how" to implement MLE, compared to the "why" of three years ago.

One truly memorable moment in the conference is the passalonga given by West Visayas State University-in Iloilo City's Agusan, who is considered the father of MLE in the Philippines. In 1948, Agustin carried out the experimental use of Hiligaynon as medium of instruction in his Iloilo's schools and proved the superiority of the L1 in teaching children. In the received the posthumous award, Agustin's daughter Milo said:

"The best way to honor Jose V. Aguilar would be to increase once again the number of hours for teaching in our elementary and high schools, with the commensurate number of subjects to ensure the best learning by our intelligent race, because as all theories of education will tell you, learning takes time and is cumulative. A very good way of honoring Jose V. Aguilar would be to do as you are doing now to institutionalizing MTBB-LE. The best way to honor Jose V. Aguilar would be to listen education."

Magsaysay F. Gamiguin Jr is the congressman of the second district of Misamis Oriental.

Love express

AT THE time I did it, it seemed to be an utterly desperate step, but at the same time it promised unimaginable fun. It was not your typical day at the mall, or coffee-and-cupcake time with friends. And it was not a night of timeless chat with pals whining about the same old boy-boss and all. It was the night when I sat cramped on the pee pedal and did a little operate top down heroic lane.

It happened right after I broke off a wedding engagement last year and I found myself in the company of friends who were so worried and affected by it as much as I was. They suggested we get back into the "market" ASAP—that is, to be talent hunts, to be taken cared of, to be nurtured, to be loved and be in love again. To tell you the truth, they made me feel somehow like I needed to put up a streamer announcing a "76 percent off" my worth and a red marked down price tag on my butt. (No, I didn't want the tag on my eyes, they are probably my body's sexiest parts) and that was it. At the ready to get back behind the show window (I thought of telling them, just make sure after the sale I'm delicately wrapped in a decent paper bag with a pink ribbon.)

The problem was, I didn't know my worth then, so it was a little difficult to figure out how to close that sale—that is, if any other would come by. Anyway, their concern came out moving, though their proposition are scary, really crazy—but my friends loved me, which was what actually mattered most, which was why the whole idea of getting back into the market was not as much of a priority. But those friends, believe me, they were relentless.

So I signed up for a Speed Dating event (yep, you heard me right, speed dating), hoping to partake of the Amnesia Girl phenomenon, although I was clueless, scared and bemused of the whole idea. I got into the venue on the dot, but when I arrived, there did turn drinking inside the bar, just me the venue. Was I really this desperate? Oh, please!!! What was I thinking?

As I contemplate either plant for a massage instead to regain my composure and then decided to go home. But those relentless friends had driven all the way to the "venue" to make sure I'd be there. It was raining, really raining, but no amount of rain could dampen their hopes. So the rush I went to get the home inside a U-turn and I was on my way back to them. I was more determined for the affair. But a picture of relief could be seen running on my friends' faces when they saw me. It turned out that the early-bird-finishing eagles there were not part of the arrangement and I found out that none must refer participated in the event would come to date.

This is how the game is played: Girls sit down, boys approach their table, a two-minute talk ensues about anything under the sun. To about the moon, I must say. Then the bell rings, the boys must round up to change partners. So it goes through the night, until everyone has met everyone—and there's time to rate the dates. Those whose rates match will be partnered and exchanged later through e-mail and it's up to them to decide whether or not they would take their rates a notch higher. Sounds so instant.

It was fun because I came to realize how really different people are from one another. The manner they shook hands or asked names varied with every person. Some were reserved, others were hushed, a few acted confident, and there were those smarty-ass that were as I was. And you could sense those who were there not for the sake but for the "fall"—you could almost hear them saying, "Hey I'm so good, you need me," or "I'm the best, who in the world do you mean with that remark?" I was laughing the whole time.

In the line to the event organizers and the participants, out there, with them, I was free. Even if I might have upgraded out, instead I found the whole actual encounter to be fun. It was like a celebration of being who you really are in front of total strangers and having the courage to say, "Yes, I am on my own right now." I stole a glance at my pink nose-free friends and I saw them in tears. They were so happy to see me back again and to know me taught like a total woman. I was, I am a real woman. Yes!

I actually bet a match and he later asked me out for cakes. But I think this one was what my friends really wanted to happen. That night, they didn't want for me to make the sale, but for me to realize my worth, not to think of myself as a cheap commodity that is up for grabs. Because if I do finally get back into the market, I would not be just a "buy-one, take one" deal. I believe they achieved that. We took pictures, we hugged, and we called it a night. It was a night-down the last time I shall never forget. It was a liberating experience. Thank God for my relentless friends.

April Kristel Ledesma, 27, is a flight attendant for a local low cost carrier and is once again engaged to be wed; it is hoped, before this year ends.

YOUNG BLOOD

April Kristel Ledesma

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What's their challenges as current issues? We welcome contributions from the twenty-something and below. — Ed.

Languages and civilization

COMMENTARY

Magsaysay F. Gamiguin Jr

Making a stand for truth and accountability

BUSINESS MATTERS

David L. Balangue

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago

IN THE NEWS

K+12 most likely to fail

LETTERS

THE CONTROVERSIAL K+12 issue really was controversial. All the commentaries by Filipino academic scientists that I have read are not in favor of the new K+12 program (e.g., "Science and K+12," Inquirer, 2/5/12). On the other hand, those supporting it are too amazed at our total scientific ignorance, without political rhetoric or properly published works (e.g., "Group launches program to save K-9 science," Inquirer, 1/28/12). In particular, their views differ in the crucial science part of the K+12 curriculum.

Among the reasons of those against the K+12 are: (1) the new program should first undergo a trial run in selected schools before nationwide adoption; (2) there are no valid studies of local problems to support the curricular changes and additional two years; (3) the new program compares deficiencies between the intricate results of international research on science education; and (4) there are more urgent problems like teachers, classrooms, textbooks, dropouts, etc.

Recent developments in the teaching of science have shown the importance of early (kindergarten) exposure to science, and the changed ways of thinking their lives in. There are no evidence in the K+12 curriculum. Examples are reported by the Nobel laureate Carl Wieman, by former Harvard president Summers of the US National Academy of Sciences Bruce Alberts, and by Colombia physics professor Brian Greene. They have been involved in research on science education, whose interactive results have been rewarded by changing jobs once.

Their studies suggest a better way to improve basic education: (a) pay only the right people in charge; (b) program components should be based on tested studies abroad and on properly published studies of local problems; (c) undergo trial runs or verification in selected schools before nationwide implementation. Only one per region is the work of the husband-and-wife team of scientists and recipients of the 2010 Ramon Magsaysay Award for science—Ochoterena and Ms. Victoria Bautista ("Poverty and scarcity are no barriers to quality education," Inquirer, 1/6/12).

Their studies initiated the following: (1) requiring the need for qualified teachers; (2) only one copy of textbook per class needed; (3) no expensive lab equipment; (4) only one lecture of the allowed class period needed and (5) students use plain bamboo rods. Their students, under such learning conditions, have shown a marked increase in proficiency levels, especially in science, math and reading comprehension.

Based on the above information—and in lack of the necessary exposure to evaluate information currently on the part of those who proposed it—the issue in the K+12 program is likely in full. The phased implementation (starting with next June's batch of Grade 1 pupils and first-year high schoolers) will not substitute for a trial run. Why have we not learned in the last five decades from the failed programs in education?

—FLORI LAGMAN, MD
retired professor of marine science, UP Diliman, florilagman@gmail.com

UPDEPP's permanent home ready by June 2013

IT IS unfortunate that while we were enjoying in the University of the Philippines Diliman Extension Program in Pampanga (UPDEPP) over exciting developments in the unit's permanent site in Clarkfield, Mamlet, San Antonio's letter (1/26) "Same permanent campus, UP-P looking to construction hence!" got into our Opinion page of the Inquirer's Pinoy Pulse.

Gemma, a UP San Fernando alumna, lamented the plight of the unit over the past years—displaced from San Fernando to Clark Field because of the Mt. Pinatubo eruption. Its students had to hold classes in dilapidated classrooms. The libraries historical that diverse spaces in the permanent site in Clark are interwoven problems.

I was not yet the director of UPDEPP (I was just appointed on Aug. 25, 2011) when construction in the permanent site commenced in 2010, but as a member of the faculty I know that construction got delayed because of insufficiencies in the building plan, which were needed to address problems raised by the soil test findings.

I appreciate Tan's sincere concern. I guess when she wrote the letter she was still fired up by the well-attended reunion of the UP Isah Fernando Alumni on Jan. 16, 2012 where the alumni decided to contribute P1,000 each as a study to support the completion of UPDEPP's permanent home.

I wanted to speak before the group to share some good news during the reunion, but I did not want to steal the thunder from president Alfredo Pascual and chancellor Caesar Saloma. The good news was that UPDEPP could beat the deadline of Clark Development Corp. (CDC) for our unit to vacate the present site on or before June 2013 to allow the expansion of the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DMIA). We received letter for the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) allocated P60 million for the completion of phase 3 of our Academic Building 1.

Also, construction of academic building 1, phase 1, was started in October 2007, and the commencement of phase 2 of the do-mitory building is about to start this month.

Lastly, the AV Office of the Campus Architect (OCA), which is in charge of the management and maintenance of the UPDEPP site in Diliman, is optimistic that phases 1 and 2 of Academic Building 1 will be completed on or before June 2013, especially since Chancellor Saloma, during his visit to Clark last Jan. 27, committed to give around P11 million from the OPCOMM income for phase 2.

I hope this clarifies the issues raised by Tan in regard to our future home. I thank her for her concern for UPDEPP and for highlighting the need of Central Luzon's underprivileged youth for affordable but quality education.

—E CRAFFO SOLLETON, PHD, director, UP Extension Program in Pampanga, UPDEPP Campus, Clarkfield

SSS clarifies amnesty for late loan payments

THIS IS in reference to the news item published in the Inquirer's Jan. 13 issue, titled "Pag-ibig, SSS offer amnesty on unpaid loan penalties." We would like to clarify the news feed which states:

"The Social Security System and Pag-Ibig Fund are offering some members and employers full or partial relief on penalties for unpaid loans and unremitted contributions, amending republic."

The SSS is not offering an amnesty on late contributions. What we announced recently was an amnesty on penalties on delinquent loan accounts, which will begin on April 2 this year.

Late our monthly members get overlayed by this article, we are issuing this clarification and are calling on our members to check the SSS website at www.sss.gov.ph for more information about the new modernization of penalties program for delinquent loans.

—MARILYN C. RUGAYAN, vice president, Public Affairs and Special Events Division, Social Security System

Rare but touching birthday message from GSIS

FOR THE first time since I started receiving in the 1990s my monthly old-age pension from the Government Service Insurance System, I received on my 86th birthday last Jan. 20 a text message that read that: "May you continue to be blessed with good health and happiness. -Happy birthday from your GSIS family."

I was deeply touched by this very meaningful greeting, which I believe is an innovation introduced by GSIS new president and general manager, Robert Vergara. But I have no way of responding to such kind words directly because the text message did not indicate the cell number. Or, shall I say, it was a computer-generated text message sent to all pensioners throughout the country? No matter how it was sent, a word of the purpose for which it was intended.

I would like to say "Maraming salamat" to all GSIS employees for a job well done. May you also be blessed with long years of human and beneficial service to the more or less, million pensioners in the country and abroad. This innovation should have been made by the previous GSIS management. And the same can be replicated by other pension agencies of the government.

—ROMUALDO O. PUTULA, (Filial Town, Nueva Caceres, Camarines Sur) 4400

Why consulates are important to overseas Filipinos

ALL OF us, concerned and affected Filipinos in Germany, as well as our families and friends, are earnestly hoping for a reconsideration of the decision to close Philippine consular posts, including the Philippine Consulate General in Frankfurt, whose services are particularly important to us.

Contrary to the general perception, as necessary consulates cannot perform the major functions of a Philippine consulate, such as the issuance of passports, authentication of documents, etc.

Our therefore request President Aquino to stop the closure of Philippine consular offices, particularly our Philippine consulate in Frankfurt.

—VICTORIA VILLAR-BODMER, cochief of the concerned person in Germany; president, University of the Philippines Alumni Association, Germany e.V.

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Defense: It's Cristina's money from family firm

From page A1

accounts with the Philippine Savings Bank (PSBank) as payee. The "integrity of the amounts" that belonged to Basa-Guidote Enterprises Inc., a corporation owned by his wife's family, according to lawyers Tranquil Salvador III and Ruel Pardo Quicho.

The the ombudsman's source of things, [if] you deposit your money in your spouse's name, and then you learn this is being sought for examination, wouldn't you react?" Salvador told reporters in a briefing at the Philippine Columbian Plaza in Manila.

Corona's only ace

But the prosecution said Corona could not keep using Basa-Guidote Enterprises as his safe conduit for every unapproved, undeclared peso cash deposit and condemnation moves cited in the Senate impeachment trial.

"Every effort [Corona's] undeclared assets and unexplained wealth have come out, Basa-Guidote is becoming their only arc to save themselves. Their reasoning has become twisted, and it is wearing thin very fast," Marikina Rep. Romero Quimbo, a spokesperson of the prosecution panel, said in a press conference.

Quimbo pointed out that when the Coronas' Bonifacio Bldgs condominium and The Bellagio penthouse were presented as evidence at the Senate trial, Corona's defense team argued that the latter had been obtained by the funds from Basa-Guidote Enterprises.

And when more than P80 million in total deposits were uncovered in his PSBank accounts last week, Corona again used the corporation as his main defense, Quimbo said.

When to withdraw

The defense's Quicho explained that Corona and his wife Cristina had thought it would withdraw the amount to shield it from controversy in view of his impeachment.

"They withdrew it to protect the amount because they believed that this money belonged to Basa-Guidote Enterprises," Quicho said in the interview following at the Philippine Columbian Plaza. "This was withdrawn so this would not be included in the impeachment complaint."

PSBank president Bernadette Ang, III told the impeachment court that Corona closed three time deposit accounts—which had opening balances of P17 million, P6.1 million and P7.09 million—on Dec. 12, 2011, the same day 188 lawmakers filed an impeachment complaint against him.

Arnaldo Tiangson, manager of the Pillbank branch on Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City said that Corona had sent an authorization through his wife to close the three accounts, and that the amounts was withdrawn in the form of a manager's check.

One of the properties of Basa-Guidote Enterprises in Manila was repossessed in 2000 for P16 million. The check was marked as evidence by the prosecution last month.

Salvador has confirmed that a check worth P16 million was deposited in the accounts of his client with Pillbank.

'In full control'

But the defense was asked: If the amount belonged to Basa-Guidote Enterprises, why was it deposited in Corona's accounts?

"Perhaps this was just entrusted by the wife to her husband because of the intra-family dispute [in Basa-Guidote Enterprises]. But she was in full control of it," Salvador said.

Quicho said the source of that amount could be traced to the documents that had been marked as evidence by the prosecution.

"They should scrutinize the documents that have been marked. If their scrutiny is proper, they'll find out that this way [not only sourced from Basa-Guidote but [also] sourced in an honorable way," he said.

The the defense lawyers insisted that they would present their evidence at the proper time.

They said they could not blame the bank officials for disclosing the information because this was covered by the subpoena requested by the impeachment court.

"I don't feel that he's beaten," Salvador said of the Chief Justice. "He expected this. He's ready for it."

Suspicious fund source

Arch Pillbank officials expected in the hearing next week include Corona's bank accounts in the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (RCBC) branch in Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City.

"We've not yet opened the dollar accounts. We've just seen the tip of the iceberg in terms of what the Chief Justice is really worth," said Arguelles, a deputy spokesperson of the prosecution.

Arguelles said the impeachment court can once more summon on the time source of the funds.

"It's not a joint account, so why was it placed under Corona's name?" he said. "There is a dispute between family members at Basa-Guidote Enterprises, and the case is pending with the courts. Does he want to have an undue influence on the outcome of the case?"

Possible resting of case

Arguelles also said that due to the evidence slashed against Corona, some members of the prosecution had pushed to stop its presentation of evidence considering Article 2 (which charges the Chief Justice with failing to truthfully disclose his assets, liabilities and net worth) in order to get a verdict from the senator-judges as quickly as possible.

"We don't want the senator-judges to lose interest, we don't want the public to lose interest, so that we might decide to rest our case while our case is strong. That is the argument for resting about our presentation," he said.

But he added that the prosecutors and the House leaders, including members of the anti-terror and communication team, would have to reach a consensus on whether to go the full eight articles of impeachment or just one or three articles.

Quimbo said some prosecution members had already intervened themselves in their respective cases and did not want their efforts to go to waste.

Arguelles said the issue of whether the Pillbank documents would be admitted as evidence by the impeachment court remained very little considering that the bank officials had already revealed that Corona had more than P80 million in cash deposits.

CONSIGLIAL PROPERTY Chief Justice Renato Corona and wife Cristina wave at supporters from the balcony of the Supreme Court building in Manila. ALEXANDER NEMENZO

Basa-Guidote, Coronas feuding since 1989 over firm's ownership

From page A1

which she is now "almost sole owner."

Sold for P16 million

Earlier in January, the debate had marked an evidence-a prosecution of a check for P16 million that had been deposited in the accounts of the Coronas at Pillbank. Corona's lawyers said the P16 million was payment made by the City of Manila for a piece of property that it bought from the BGEI in 2003.

According to documents from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), BGEI was incorporated on May 28, 1981. The incorporators—grandchildren of the late Secundina Basa-Guidote, the distinguished pianist and composer—included Cristina Basa-Corona, Jose Ma. Basa, the distinguished pianist and composer's grandchildren Jose Ma. Basa Jr., Raymunda G. Basa, Ma. Victoria Basa, Vicente Basa, Asuncion Basa-Rosario, Antonio Basa, and Jose Ma. Basa III; Basa, Maria Basa, Jr., Raymundo G. Basa as corporate officers.

Cristina's parents

Cristina's involvement in the BGEI also dated from her parents, Horacio Boco and Asuncion Basa-Boco, the company's president and board secretary, respectively, since 1983, documents obtained by the business dossier.

By 1995, most of the original incorporators had died. Horacio passed away in California in 1991, while Dr. Concepcion Basa, the board treasurer, died in 1995. Two former officers, Mario Basa and Rosario Basa, who had served as vice president and board treasurer, respectively, died earlier in 1985. Only Cristina's mother Asuncion was alive but had abandoned her position.

BGEI's registration was revoked by the SEC on May 26, 2003, for failure to make financial reports. But as the debate among the notaries at the hearing showed, the corporation did not cease to function.

In fact, from about 1989, the stockholders and heirs have been involved in an ownership dispute that has taken the case through the SEC, Manila regional trial courts and the Court of Appeals.

From various statements and letters she wrote in 2002 opposing the appointment of Renato Corona as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Ana Basa, a cousin of Cristina, accused the latter of having "usurped" control of the family corporation despite her mother, Asuncion Basa-Boco owning only 10 percent of the corporation's stock.

According to Ana, Cristina had "cunningly delegated his responsibility and function [sic] to his daughter Cristina." She said there was "no board resolution to support" this and that the rest of the board had been "completely ignorant" of it.

Ana further alleged that Cristina "effectively kept the majority stockholders in the dark, completely unaware about its operations and its financial status."

Estate case

In June 1995, notice to the public ads came out in major newspapers announcing that an estate case had been filed before Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 95 (now Branch 1) against Cristina by BGEI majority stockholders Jose Ma. Basa III, Ana's father, in behalf of the company.

The notice warned the public, particularly the tenants of the BGEI properties, not to succumb to the rumor of Leganda and J. Figueroa Streets in Sampaloc, Manila, that Cristina was involved in a "criminal complaint for rentals ... for usurpation/illegal disposals of personals" due the BGEI.

In November 1995, the city prosecutor of Manila dismissed the estafa charge, saying that Cristina was able to show proof that she did not pocket P224,000 in rent money paid by tenants, and that it was instead had been "duly retained and recorded in the books of the corporation."

"Though it would seem complainants' allegations are correct to first glance yet the same is fully explained by respondent during showing proof that the same pocketed the P224,000 rentals of Domingan Bonquin," prosecutor presented proof, specifically the certification from Virginia Reyes and Ana, corporate secretary-auditors of Basa Guidote, to the effect that the P224,000 was duly entered and recorded in the books of the corporation," it said.

"Said certification is a clear proof that the money subject matter of this case was turned over to Basa-Guidote Enterprises as ongoing therefore the contention of complainants that respondent misappropriated the P224,000, hence are find no criminal intent on the part of respondent," the prosecutor said.

Libel suit

Cristina subsequently sued Jose Jr., along with Raymunda G. Basa, Jessy Basa Deschavez, Cecilia Herrera Basa, Flor Ma. Basa, Felix Carlos Hernandez and Virginia Macatonia, for libel for the publication of the notice ads.

In September 1997, the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 95 found Jose III, Raymunda and Hernandez guilty of libel and sentenced them to imprisonment ranging from four months to two years and to pay half of the litigation costs. They were also ordered to pay Cristina P700,000 in moral damages. The court acquitted Jessy Cecil in said libel.

The trial court ruled that "there was no good motive" on the part of the complainants and cited that it found "open enmity" between Basa and Cristina which surfaced in October 1989, when Jose III, Concepcion Basa, Flor, Cecilia and Raymunda, representing themselves as majority stockholders of BGEI, "ousted [Cristina] as vice president and assistant secretary" of BGEI, and elected a new set of officers in a special meeting, supposedly to solve "management problems of the corporation."

SEC injunction

However, the new officers were unable to take over the management of BGEI. In December 1989, the SEC issued a writ of preliminary injunction ordering the new officers to "refrain from representing themselves as the new management, from [exercising] any and all acts" of BGEI.

According to the Manila Regional Trial Court, "ousted Basa III et al must have deeply resented their eventual before the SEC, and this indeed them to file the libel case against [Cristina] by initiating false charges against her before the Office of the City Prosecutor of Manila."

Jose III et al appealed the decision, but in August 2000, the Court of Appeals affirmed the penalties subsequently upheld the lower court's decision.

In its decision, the appellate court said: "The notice ad is not a private communication nor a fair and true report. It was addressed to the public at large by defendants the corporation had only eight tenants ... If appellants' intention was merely to inform the tenants of the composition of the alleged nonexistence of their rental payments, they could have sent out letters/notices to the tenants advising them of the non-existence. In other words, there was absolutely no need for publication of the notice ad."

The Court of Appeals also modified their sentences and ordered them instead to pay fines of P6,000 each and half of the litigation costs.

Coronas accused

In April 2002, Jose III filed an opposition on the nomination of Renato Corona to the Supreme Court, saying that Corona "will not be capable of rendering fair and just decisions as he has not exhibited such character."

In his letter to the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC), Jose III accused the Corona couple of meeting titles over the family business.

"With the intention of gaining control over BGEI, [Cristina] with the tacit consent of [Renato], filed two cases with the Securities and Exchange Commission purportedly to prevent us from holding a stockholders' meeting," he said, adding that Renato "managed to get a questionable ruling" from SEC.

In his letter, Jose III also told the JBC that Cristina had been "administering the corporation by herself without rendering any accounting to the stockholders" and that Renato had been "actively involved" in preventing the group from holding stockholders' meetings.

"By doing so, he is tolerating and condoning the unfair and unlawful actions of his wife," Basa III added.

Letter to Sen. Nene

In April 2003, Ana also wrote to then Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel, questioning Corona's moves to serve in the high court.

"The injustice heaped upon the entire Basa family is not merely the handiwork of Cristina Corona but a product of the manipulations of my cousin-Corona himself," Ana wrote in her April 25, 2003 letter, a copy of which was obtained by the business.

Ana also raised the issue of the sale of the BGEI property on Bonifacio St. in Manila to the city of Manila in 2003 for P24.7 million.

"Where did Cristina Corona obtain authority to sell the property?" she asked.

No authority to sell

She accused Corona, who she said had negotiated the sale with then Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, of misrepresentation to the Manila government that he/she had the authority to sell the property and that the stockholders had authorized the sale.

"For it is because my father ... never approved the sale and no stockholders' meeting was ever set to approve the same," she said.

"This may appear like an internal family problem, as Atty. Corona makes it appear when, ever he is confronted about it. But he conveniently forgot a few more than that. Now that he is Junior Corona, he is in a position to thwart the ends of justice the same way he did with our cause to suit his personal interest," Ana said in her letter.

Sources: Court of Appeals, Inquirer Research Archives

PNB

NOTICE OF SPECIAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Special Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on March 6, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. at the Grand Ballrooms, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pedro Gil cor. Dr. M. Adriano, Manila.

The Agenda for this Meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of the Amendment of the Plan of Merger between Philippine National Bank and Allied Banking Corporation
4. Adjournment

Only stockholders of record as of February 6, 2013 will be entitled to notice and to vote during the meeting. Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m. on March 6, 2013.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a PROXY at your stock certificate then 5:00 p.m. on March 1, 2013 at the Office of the Corporate Secretary at PNB Financial Center, President Diosdado Macapagal Blvd., Pasay City 1308. All proxies received will be validated by the Bank's Corporate Secretary on March 2, 2013, 2:00 p.m., at the Office of the Stock Transfer Agent at Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Pasay City, February 6, 2013.

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De Lima meets whistle-blower

From page A1

meet. Cuz said De Lima had agreed to Makalintal's request.

De Lima could not be reached for comment on the report.

She spoke to secrecy not with Makalintal, rather to a Bureau of Corrections employee and for mere assurance head of the Bureau's link and towards committee, a day after the document published on interviews with him in which he said personnel connected to Customs Commissioner Angelito Gambala Dean positive duty officials and that there was corruption, prostitution and other irregularities at the prison.

Makalintal's allegations were unfavorably denied by Bureau of Customs Commissioner Angelito Gambala, who also talked with De Lima yesterday.

Malacañang informed

"Sir Makalintal asked the secretary to be included in the presentation," Philippine Presidential Peace Adviser Teresita Deles said. "The secretary said he would be enrolled in the program. She even called in 8699 officials to brief him about the matter also."

President Aquino's deputy spokesperson Abigail Valte, said Makalintal was coordinating with De Lima on the issue.

"Secretary De Lima advised us that she already met with Director Penaflorida on this matter. A verbal explanation was given," Valte said in a text briefing.

Valte said De Lima asked Pangilinan to put his explanation in writing. "Let us just wait for the updates but as of the moment, Secretary De Lima has taken steps regarding the matter," Valte said.

Earlier yesterday, De Lima told reporters she would be meeting with Makalintal to "assess the credibility or plausibility" of his allegations so she could take appropriate action, "maybe to do a big operation."

Makalintal, who was also accompanied by lawyer Alex Pagtsa in the meeting with De Lima, was expected to submit to the justice department on Monday, at 10:00 a.m. sworn statement.

"The Secretary promised to conduct a full-blown investigation after he submits his affidavit," Cuz said.

Makalintal also asked De Lima's help in extending his leave of absence from the Bureau. Deles said. Penal Farm, where he is now assigned.

"He's concerned about his safety there. He wants to be with his family in Oriental Mindoro City. He's also concerned about their security," Cuz said.

Cuz said De Lima was "shocked" and "dismayed" when Makalintal showed her his documents as "proof" of his allegations.

Among the documents were a covering statement worth P10 million approved this month which allegedly did not go through De Lima, and the Bureau's P32-million purchase of rice from a private seller instead of from the National Food Authority, as requested under the law.

Meeting with BuCor chief

De Lima also reportedly talked with Pangilinan at the BJMP. Details of that meeting have not been disclosed as of press time.

Makalintal's interviews with Abdullah's allegations "softens" their meeting yesterday. De Lima said: "Some of the things he talked about are old problems. I thought all of those are already gone. They were locked when a few fleeting investigations were conducted in the days of former Director Jaime Pang Bino's predecessor Ernesto J. Dadiaco."

"(The new allegations are) indebilitating, on top of being frustrating, trying and heavy to the heart," De Lima said.

De Lima said they were "alarmed" by Makalintal's claims that irregularities were continuing at the state penitentiary.

"The information is alarming if true. I'm not saying what is being disclosed is true, that's why I still have these investigations. But I need to talk to him (Makalintal) first because he reportedly has evidence, documents," she added.

Regarding Pangilinan's claims that Makalintal could just be giving back at the director for his transfer to the Davao penal colony, De Lima said:

"I think that's what Director Pangilinan is saying, that he (Makalintal) has an axe to grind, therefore (Makalintal) need to operate it. Common attitude. But for Pangilinan endorsed (transfer) because he was concerning the facility," De Lima said. "Whatever that is, those allegations, being very serious, must be investigated."

Makalintal, however, has said he is not complaining but that the transfer of his enemies was illegal.

Claims, counterclaim

In the Inquirer article, Makalintal claimed, among others, that inmate Jaime Bulilan Go and other rich inmates could avail luxury special treatment and that prison irregularities worsened when Pangilinan took over as Bureau director last year.

Makalintal also accused Pangilinan of implementing illegal transfers of inmates and of the P66 million in the BJMP without the required public bidding.

Pangilinan laughed off Makalintal's allegations, saying he rejected the latter to make up for his own failure. Pangilinan also claimed Makalintal was involved in an anomalous bidding during the previous BuCor administration. Whatever part does Secretary De Lima

Justice secretary gets Senate subpoena

By Jerome Aning

JUSTICE Secretary Leila de Lima received yesterday a subpoena from the Senate impeachment court to produce documents and testify in the impeachment trial of Chief Justice Renato Corona.

The subpoena, which was requested by the House prosecutors, directed De Lima to appear before the Senate on July 12 (a month on Article 7 of the impeachment complaint, which charges Corona with betrayal of public trust through his alleged partiality in granting compromise restraining order (TRO) on day to controversies involving the Department of Justice (DOJ) on former Pasaleme Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her husband Jose Miguel Arroyo.

SUPO subpoenaed, I have no choice but to appear," especially since the prosecution may be planning to take up Article 7," De Lima told reporters in an interview.

She said her testimony would be "essential" in view of the many key points that she had issued on the Arroyos.

According to the House prosecutors, the TRO was issued by the Supreme Court to give the Arroyos "an opportunity to escape prosecution and frustrate the ends of justice."

Corona executive accused of "favoring" the high court's decision on the effectivity of the TRO after it was discovered that the Arroyos had failed to comply with one of the conditions.

De Lima has been directed to produce, aside from court pleadings, investigation reports and the records of visit of Corona in October and November 2011, a surveillance camera video of the Baler Nueva encounter of the DOJ building on Nov. 15, 2011, and the record of the arrival of the Arroyos' airplane to be allowed to leave through the Ninoy Aquino International Airport on the same day.

Through the subpoena, the House prosecutors want to establish the extent to which Gloria Arroyo intended to unwind several for minute citizen benefit, that the TRO was anticipated to be issued by the DOJ on Nov. 15, 2011, that the Arroyos tried to escape the country on the same day that Ben Gomez "hastily" returned to the Philippines on Nov. 10, 2011.

PGH 1945: Days of terror, nights of fear in the liberation of Manila

From page A1

took Ilocos Sur, days to cross the intersection of Pedro Gomez Street and Taft Avenue, advancing toward Paco Cemetery.

The nationalist weapons fire that raked the American lines been hastily defended building of the hospital and the University of the Philippines beyond. Many of those who were in the area in spite of the heavy artillery caught between the two was subjected to be one way.

My school, Ateneo de Manila on Padre Faura, was closed and Adrian once left the Japanese Army at it was named and American, and therefore, enemy property. The Japanese, however, allowed many schools, like De La Salle College on Taft Avenue, to reopen. It was there that my brother Ben was a student at De La Salle College began.

Blue invasion

Despite the "blue invasion," the La Salle Brothers and La Salle sisters were kind to us American civilians.

Above De La Salle suspended classes indefinitely, our family moved to Baguio City to study October 1944, returning only to PGH—where my father was confined—the following year.

Before leaving, they offered the De La Salle Brothers, acting with incredible courage and concern for the safety of the students under their care, decided to secret each of us home.

We were divided into groups, each made up of boys living in one district of Manila. I belonged to the Ilocos group of about 50 students. During the battle, 40 the Brothers were murderously killed by the Japanese.

The battle caught us inside PGH.

On Feb. 7, 1945, we could hear artillery shells striking closer to us.

From the balcony of our suite, we watched the striking trajectory of artillery shells coming from somewhere in Intramuros and exploding against the black night sky and smoking around Port Area. The crackle of machine guns and rifle fire filled the air as fighting raged.

By Feb. 10, the U.S. Army had set up its 155- millimeter battery in Grace Park. There must have been other artillery batteries from the east as we heard the whine of shells flying over PGH in the direction of Downtown Rizal Boulevard, where the Japanese had set up their naval guns facing Manila Bay.

Some shells seemed to have a delayed action fuse as there would strike the building first and explode a minute later, causing shattering. Fortunately our rooms were given the priority to drop on the floor. The rest had to squat, remain standing or lean against the wall, sometimes for days. The doctors operated on the wounded without anesthetics and without electricity.

We later found out why the American shore shelling Ebb.

During the lulls, a paper cub would fly low over the hospital complex observing the accuracy and effect of the artillery barrage, like forward artillery spotter fly overhead than Japanese soldiers would crisscross the grounds, firing at the aircraft. This only drew the more the Americans.

My mother knew why the Japanese had forced the people to hide inside—to make the Americans think that only Japanese soldiers were occupying the hospital and thus provoke the American into bombing it.

Courageous Jesuit

The artillery barrages started at 7 or 8 a.m., breaking off at lunch. Then resuming in the afternoon. B-29 Medium bombers were seen flying within at two-top level causing Japanese positions around PGH. "Thus P-51 Mustang fighter planes began showing up.

As the fighting raged closer to the hospital, rumors spread that a massacre inside the PGH compound was imminent.

Father Cadmus, the hospital's consultant priest-in-charge, Jesuit the drilling to administer to the wounded, and led the prayers read by loud. He blessed the people and gave us general absolution. His courage and dedication to his ministry was one of the many inspiring acts of heroism during those agonizing days.

He was eventually taken Award to the basement after Japanese soldiers lobbed smoke grenades inside our wards. It was difficult to sleep at night as we could hear soldiers running around looking for enemies.

Lamps were dimmed as soon as the sound of bombed boom could be heard approaching. Some soldiers were spit-face and others were not. At dawn, we could tiptoe around stuttered, pressure on a girl and drag her out into the night.

Cannon fire and prayers

The morning of Feb. 27 dawned and the lights left by loosed ourselves for the moment, ing artillery barrage. The rapid rhythmic of "wonders for" machine guns could be heard, underpinned by the solids of mandatory rifle-armed bolt action "scooper" from bayonets or mortars.

We were assigned to the thought that we would die before the American arrived. There was almost no food and water in the fermented-smelling bamboo barrage, the hospital inside the hospital.

A heavy barrage suddenly came crashing down on us preceded by the all-too-familiar German humming or ominous Cessna engine. The barrages came in quick succession. Machine-gun fire from both sides suddenly opened up in a deafening pitch.

Heavy fire pinpointed the building with bullets and bone shrapnel. There was a crash of reinforcing bars and concrete and the sound of mortar-being shrapnel and bullets. My sister crouched under the elevation, but showers of spent fire exploding shells and shrapnel so low-filled us three prayers asking God to save us from the horrors around.

Then, as if by magic, all noise stopped. We heard the stomping of boots on the concrete floor over our heads as Japanese machine gunners set up weapons right on top of us. As they fired, responding heavy machine gun-fire from scorching to the back of the PGH compound.

Heroes, song and unsung

After a deafening silence, we heard a chorus of voices singing—"God Bless America" as approaching US soldiers were mobbed, embraced and kissed.

A stone's throw away, Japanese soldiers were running back to PGH towards the Bureau of Aeronautics Building in Intramuros. Some of them were hit as the hour drew on. There, we saw a line of Sherman tanks facing the administration offices still in position before they delivered the point-blank barrage that poured the assault on the Japanese building.

There was a long line of ambulances, weapon carriers and trucks ready to evacuate the patients and hospital staff, supervised by fully armed, steel-helmeted American soldiers.

Then we were transferred to the Philippine General Hospital to unroll the PP complex.

PGH was liberated by elements of the 37th "Buckeye" Division of the American Army of Liberation on 9th. 37 remained dressed by Lt. Gen. Walter Krueger. Inaugural ceremonies were exact units of the Japanese Imperial Marines under Vice Admiral Sanji Iwabuchi.

On the Point of the Assumption of Our Lady on Aug. 15, Japan finally surrendered, and fighting ceased briefly. Peace returned to the land. The formal surrender took place on Sept. 2, when 100 Japanese delivered on Tokyo Bay.

Battles have their heroes, and sung and unsung. Pre-many, their will of heroes-and-heroines stories were made by God. May their all rest in peace in the embrace of the Lord.

DEMARCATION The Congress building line is seen during the battle for the liberation of Manila which rose on Feb. 3 to March 3, 1945 in the Intramuros Manila City Hall.

HISTORIC FIGURES President Manuel L. Quezon with Supreme Court Chief Justice Ramon Aranzeta

EYEWITNESS The author Miguel F. Zenarosa

Pet dog saves 2 girls, but loses her face

From page A1

bicycle's front wheel, and as it rolled, her canine got struck on it.

"I thought somebody threw the dog on the motorcycle, but I could not see anyone who might have done that," Orpia said the hospital. So did it have come to him that Kidong had intentionally blocked the motorcycle's path to save the girls.

A hero

Rudy Banggal, Dina's father who works in a nearby subdivision decoy, also says how Xia hung saved the lives of his daughters and more.

"The brave fighting her upper canine were crushed, and we couldn't see its anything to save it. We just pulled her off the wheel," Banggal said.

Then Jewel, Kidong was more to feel to the could and wrote missing for two weeks. When the family returned to their home in Dina, the looked very different.

But her human family could not care less.

"It does not matter if she's ugly. It now. What is important to us is the saved our children and we cannot thank her enough for this," Banggal said.

"Kidong is a hero," said his wife Christina.

Milk and porridge

Banggal said Kidong's love is not night have been triggered by her closeness to Dina and Princess.

He said he found Kidong to be a puppy-person like Dina. "Since puppy age, "We raised her like she was ours. We gave her Brand formed to milk brand I and porridge," he said.

Having built for the dog was a big deal for the family, according to Banggal, because he, and his wife, who sells vendors, have a combined daily income of only about P400.

Christina said that as Kidong grew, she sees had the cause food that the Family ate. "We did not intend if she was an addition to our expenses. We regarded her as part of the family," she said.

Banggal said Dina and Princess always played with the dog. "They were sleep together, he said.

He recalled that Kidong had an history of wandering outside the house, about seven miles, he said, "we could not believe she came out when she started

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Then we were transferred to the Philippine General Hospital to unroll the PP complex.

PGH was liberated by elements of the 37th "Buckeye" Division of the American Army of Liberation on 9th. 37 remained dressed by Lt. Gen. Walter Krueger. Inaugural ceremonies were exact units of the Japanese Imperial Marines under Vice Admiral Sanji Iwabuchi.

On the Point of the Assumption of Our Lady on Aug. 15, Japan finally surrendered, and fighting ceased briefly. Peace returned to the land. The formal surrender took place on Sept. 2, when 100 Japanese delivered on Tokyo Bay.

Battles have their heroes, and sung and unsung. Pre-many, their will of heroes-and-heroines stories were made by God. May their all rest in peace in the embrace of the Lord.

SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy S. Molmisa
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Chiva

Del Monte amateurs dominate PGTI Q-School

MIKAELLENG Bonoy, Alfredo and Clyde Mondilla took the top two spots after two rounds of the Philippine Golf Tour Qualifying School presented by 1st Filipinas Golf Club in Laguna last Thursday.

Bonoy carried within two under 72 despite a late bid-off surging ahead of the field with a 36-hole aggregate of 142 for a three-stroke lead over Mondilla heading to the final round of the 54-hole qualifier that will have 28 ranking spots for this year's 81st PGT circuit.

JEANIE Famous (front) of Meralco tries to drive past the defense of Talk 'N Text's Kelly Williams.

Texters score in OT; Tigers nip Painters

By Jose Navarro

OMAR Jawahir collected 24 points, 20 rebounds and four blocks as Talk 'N Text subdued Shoaks, 102-96, in overtime last night in the PBA Commissioner's Cup.

"He's not athletic, he's not flashy and his game is not pleasing to the eye," said TNT coach Chot Reyes of the Gilas U-23 import.

The Texting Texters, coming off a three-week vacation after sealing the Philippine Cup, hardly showed signs of rust as Jimmy Alapag, Jayson Castro and Kelly Williams also chipped in for the conference-opening victory.

Castro drilled a go-ahead three-pointer for a 97-96 edge, outgunning TNT's 0-of-4 shooting in the extra period.

Fortunately, the team Talk 'N Text beat in the Philippine Cup finals, made it a night of thrillers as it forged a come-from-behind 122-120 victory over Rain or Shine in the second game.

Gary David knotted in the clinching triple with 11.7 seconds left as the Tigers won on the night it was announced that JR Raymundo stepped down as Coca-Cola Foods's director for corporate accountability.

JR Cruz was also instrumental after pouring all of his 14 points in the second half, 10 of them in the final 5:05, and dishing out a pair of assists that completed the turnaround from 17 points down.

Rayles, the league's vice chair after wire supposed to resume the Board's top spot next year, will then come being Pennwalt's representative to the board.

Ronald Arumbrio, appointed alternate governor of the Tigers, will replace Rayles as voting governor of the ballclub.

Rayles's tenure in the wake of reports about the sale of the Coca-Cola franchise and the looming ouster of Marcus Lanutoy to Brown.

Meanwhile, Barangay Ginebra and Alaska sought to the Phoenix PBA Go Time tonight at the Quezon Convention Centre in Lucena City.

Lazarte banned for life

Casimero says he was tempted to hit back

By Marc Anthony Reyes

ARGENTINE boxer Luis Lazarte was banned for life for threatening the referee and sparking an ugly free fight after losing to Filipino fighters Johnriel Casimero in their IBF minimum flyweight title fight in Buenos Aires, last week.

Internet reports said the boxing body imposed the penalty against the 40-year-old Lazarte, whose reputation for being a dirty fighter took a new dimension when he was quoted as telling referee Eddie Claudio "do you want to get out of here alive?" after he docked a point for repeated punches to Casimero's head.

Claudio stopped the fight in the 10th following Lazarte's third knockdown and headbutt caused to Lazarte, and his then gauged up on Casimero and his corner in a shocking scene that has been replayed by TV stations and gone viral on the Internet.

IBF president Daryl Peoples sent a letter to the Argentine Boxing Federation (Invalda Box-ful) informing them of the decision.

Peoples was reported to have said in the letter, "I believe that I do not have to express to you that Lazarte's threat to Claudio, which [is clear] as the referee, is completely unacceptable, should not be taken lightly and merits punishment. Behavior of this nature by a fighter is not and will not be tolerated."

Meanwhile, Casimero yesterday admitted he was tempted to throw punches against the unruly action in the aftermath and aftermath.

The 22-year-old Cavitenyo, who now lives in Ormoc, Leyte, but is now a resident of Mandaue City, said he was wounded he would pass out due to lack of oxygen while hiding in the cramped space under the ring at the Club Once Unidos in Mar del Plata last Feb. 11.

"I was very afraid especially when the police took some time to enter the ring," said Casimero in Pilipino as he made the rounds in TV and radio shows yesterday. "But the police said Casimero you are safe now? Some of the police were also hurt."

He said he wanted to fight back but realized that things would get worse if he did. He exhaled calm yesterday and head home from Lazarte who, in the eighth round, even hit his shoulder.

"Mr. Lazarte is a good fighter but he plays dirty," added Casimero, who dropped the Argentine twice in the ninth (8) impressive (4-2-1) with 10 stoppages.

Lazarte's fans started hurling chairs and throwing the ring after Claudio stopped the fight, triggering a the free that left Casimero's cornerman from Gilbert with broken ribs. The referee also got stitches for busted lips.

Senate president Juan Ponce Enrile has ordered the Department of Foreign Affairs to recall the ambassador to the Argentine to explain what happened. Argentina's ambassador has since apologized to the nation.

Muñoz highlights PXC29 event

MANIL "The Filipino Wrecking Machine" Muñoz will add glamour to PXC 29 when he works the corner of Pinoy Rimpeza on Feb. 18 at the Vnares Sports Arena in Pasig City.

Live 8-bit action will begin at 7 p.m. AKTV on IBC 13 will air the event at 9 p.m.

Shipper will battle Wesmichael Filipino fighter Harris Sammiento in the co-main event of the night. Shipper and Muñoz train at Baiga Training Center in Orange County, California.

Muñoz, considered as one of the best mid-throughit MMA fighters in the world, was set to fight last month but was forced to pull out of the last minute due to an injury.

Sammiento will be fighting in the country for the third time. He won his lightweight title bout against Ronnie Borja in PXC 26.

The main event of the night will feature Ale Cali of Davao going against Jesse Taitano of Guam for the PXC flyweight title. Ale has been impressive in his showing in his past two PXC fights, which includes a dominant win over Philip Pacoy in 2010. That will be Ale's biggest fight to-date.

PXC 29 is sponsored by broadcast partner AKTV and San Mig Strong Ice.

Tickets are available at ISM Tickets starting for as low as P350. All tickets come with one bottle of San Mig Strong Ice.

Luisita seniors leave PAL rivals gasping

By Manny R. Castillo

RAPID—Playing with a killer's instinct, Luisita yesterday fired 149 points to nail its lead over Cebu Country Club to 14 after two rounds of the inter-clubmembership division play of the Philippine Amateur Interclub.

Skipper Iggy Clavecilla and Steve Bonus-Dean each recited three-over-par 75s worth 51 points at the up-and-down Rosales Palm Country Resort, and the Luisitanos also got 47 from depot Iggy for the day's best score for 296 overall.

Jon Abner fired 30 points, Clifford Ordoveza had 46 and Kodki Hirai contributed 45 for CCC's 141 as the Cebu hotel squad continued to threaten crashing the exposed Luisita-Calalang party.

Defending champion Casalubong, acting as bagpipe gun for the last two rounds, posted 345 behind Don Hernandez' 83, but the Sugar Barons found themselves trailing by 16 from 12 overnight re-entrants in third spot.

The 43-of-Cara Magpantay for Luisita, the 39 of Diligan Aulio for Cebu Country Club and the 45 of Casalubong captain Luigi Palo failed to count for their respective squads.

"The thing we don't want to do (going into the last two rounds) is to have the mentality of not wanting to lose," the seasoned Clavecilla said in a very serious tone. "We should remain aggressive."

Action remains at the well-manicured Palm Garden layout today with the final round set at soggy Agro Golf tournament.

Tommy Manotoc plays the final two days for the division, the former national Fencers Games for the Luisitanos.

The platinum sponsors of the 18th PAL Interclub are Smart Communications, Rado High, Empire Media, Media Five, GIL, while the major backers are Asia Brewery, Business Mirror and Airbus.

Also lending support are the Department of Tourism, Philippine Charities, Boeing International Corp., Rustic Barbie, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Manila Bulletin, Mercurysquik Resort & Spa Cebu, Plantation Bay, Radisson Blu Hotel and Imperial Palace Waterpark & Spa Cebu.

Tournament
Championship
Iggy Clavecilla (Luisita) 75-71—296; Jon Abner (Luisita) 75-71—296; Clifford Ordoveza (CCC) 75-71—296; Kodki Hirai (CCC) 75-71—296; Steve Bonus-Dean (Luisita) 75-71—296; Don Hernandez (Casalubong) 83-83—345; Luigi Palo (Casalubong) 83-83—345; Cara Magpantay (Casalubong) 83-83—345; Diligan Aulio (Cebu Country Club) 83-83—345; Tommy Manotoc (Luisita) 83-83—345; Rodolfo Cuenca (Luisita) 83-83—345; Jun Ramos (Luisita) 83-83—345; Jun Ramos (Luisita) 83-83—345; Jun Ramos

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MMDA wages war on water hyacinths

New machine tapped for flood control

A LOCALLY developed "harvester" goes into action in Taguig City on Wednesday

By Nathaniel R. Meloza

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has started using a locally developed "water hyacinth harvester" to speed up the removal of the fast-growing aquatic plant, a river-choking nuisance partly blamed for flooding in the metropolis.

MMDA General Manager Corazon Jimenez said the four-engined machine, developed by engineers from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), could be used to unjam debris that pooled it on both sides, can harvest 200 kilos of water hyacinths in one go.

The machine uses through water hyacinth beds and mash the chopped-up vegetation down a conveyor belt and into a collecting boat.

"It'll actually be like our harvest of hyacinths, from docks to around 20 feet if the machine is operated eight hours a day. We can spend some 80,000 worth of diesel for the operation, which is quite inhuman," he said.

Jimenez said they can use the machine in several locations in Metro Manila where entrenched silting complains of heavy water hyacinth growth, which could double in size in a week.

"We are hoping we could get one for the Manggahan floodway in Pasig. The local government there always asks us to clear the area of water hyacinths," she said.

Jimenez described the water hyacinth as the "most dangerous plant worldwide," citing infestations in major waterways in North and South America, Africa and in other Southeast Asian countries.

Mbalitoja said the plant spreads quickly in any sensitive conditions in the Philippines, especially in dirty water.

Aside from causing floods, dark hyacinth beds also prevent sunlight from penetrating deep into the water, killing underwater plants and eventually the fish and other aquatic life forms that depend on them.

Jimenez said the MMDA is currently sure.

DOST Secretary Mario Montejo said the machine, constructed in the ad-research of the Government Scientific Institute, can be built on a bigger or smaller scale depending on the needs of the local governments.

"We are looking at building 10 more of these this year. It is fully operational," Montejo said.

M-16 spray leaves Rizal couple dead

By Nina Calleja

A COUPLE were killed in Pedrajano town in Rizal province on Thursday night when a man armed with M-16 rifle ran them down Thursday night.

Edwin Flores, 32, an electrician employed at San Mateo Installation and who appeared to be the main target of the attack, died of several gunshot wounds in front of the house in Phase III-A of Mesa in Barangay Guitnang Bayan at around 7:40 p.m.

Police said his wife Melinda, 40, who was taking a bath at that time, was hit by stray bullets and was still able to get out of the bathroom to call for help.

The couple's four children were inside the house during the attack and were able to rush outside screaming for help after shooting, but their mother died when the man chose to be brought to the hospital, according to the case investigator.

Investigators recovered 17 cartridges from the M-16 rifle used by the suspect, who remained at large and uniformed.

Lawyer's word: Orate shooter won't flee PH

By Julie Pl. Aurelio

BULACAN provincial board member Allan Reyes has no plans to leave the country to evade the homicide charges filed against him in connection with the shooting of Soni Orate Sr., ex-boyfriend of former Quezon City Rep. Nanette Castelo-Orate.

Reyes' lawyer, Alfredo Tiñano Jr., made the assurance yesterday as he vowed to oppose pleadings from Orate's kin seeking the issuance of a hold departure order on his client and the upgrade of the charge to murder.

Tiñano said the lawyer that Reyes "has no intention to flee," especially since he is a government official.

In a hearing yesterday, Judge Luis Enrico Macrohon of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 216 gave the defense 15 days to submit its opposition to the motion for reconsideration filed by the Orates.

Tiñano submitted three sets as qualifying circumstances to justify a murder charge, such as the abuse of superior strength or treachery on the part of the client.

Reyes faces trial for shooting Orate five times at the house of Orate, his mother-in-law, on the night of Feb. 10. The Orates had claimed it was an act of self-defense while the Reyes insisted that Soni Orate's death was premeditated.

Soni and Orate, whose marriage to different partners had been annulled, had a 13-year relationship.

The court reminded on Friday, during its session on March 23, Orate's lawyer Eduardo Bringas told the victim's son and namesake, Noel Jr., and a video scene at the hearing, but Reyes was absent.

Coddler of a notorious drug lord

WHEN Cambrio Pangilinan, a retired Army general, took over as Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) director late year, everybody thought there would be wide-ranging reforms in the country's prison system.

Pangilinan, a 1979 graduate of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), was perceived to be clean and honest.

The Philippine Army, where he retired from after 36 years of service, is not so exposed to graft and corruption unlike the police counterpart, the Philippine National Police (PNP).

In a talk I had with the retired military officer at Ayo View Hotel in Davao City a few years ago when he was still in the service, Pangilinan struck me as a staunch and honest public servant.

Things have probably changed since he retired from the military and was given a civilian post.

Pangilinan is being accused by a BuCor subordinate of going around a law that requires public bidding for highly funded projects so he could award the projects to friends and associates.

The cash was to make the cost of each project not exceed P500,000, the maximum amount that doesn't require bidding.

If Pangilinan's projects at the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) were to be summed up, they would amount to millions of pesos that would need public bidding, and NBP grand Mahusgosan Mahilda.

Clearly, Pangilinan favors the law and is playing around it. If Mahilda is telling the truth.

But the worst accusation hurled against Pangilinan by Mahilda is giving VIP treatment to convicted drug lord Amin Imam Boratong.

I am deeply affected by Mahilda's charge about Boratong because my brother Erwin and I were partly responsible for sending Boratong to prison.

Boratong, a Moroman Muslim, owned the drug clandestine (film market) in Pasig City that Erwin and I placed under surveillance for several weeks in 2000 for my defunct TV program, "Tambong Mickey Tadlo."

ON TARGET

Raymond Tadlo

The surveillance led to a successful raid on the illegal drugs/film market by hundreds of policemen led by then police Director Marcelo Be A.

For said effort, Erwin and I received the highest award given by the Philippine National Police to civilians, a recognition which we value dearly.

After several years of trial, Boratong was convicted although there were reports that he tried to bribe somebody for his acquittal.

I will never forgive Pangilinan for giving VIP treatment to Boratong, such as allowing him to go out of the NBP compound without a court order or permission from Justice Secretary Leila de Lima, should the accusation by Mahilda be true in fact.

Pangilinan's other "sins" are allegedly standing public heels—which is a term among government people—and giving VIP treatment to convicted mad-rape killer Sultra Go.

Those are minor compared to giving VIP treatment to Boratong.

I am not downgrading Go's crimes, but he killed only one person in one moment of insanity.

Boratong deliberately and without mercy destroyed thousands of lives, including innocents and teenagers.

Erwin and I went with the police raiders where they savagely down on the drug flea market in Pasig and saw many housewives, some with their children in tow, among those inside the compound.

We were told that the housewives would get a "fee" before going on their way to buy food for the day.

We were also told that high school and college students, some of them wearing school uniforms, were inside the compound which was only a few meters from the Pasig City Hall.

NO PLACE FOR BATHING Dirty laundry water cascades from pollution-threatening Taktak waterfalls creating a frothy lagoon beneath it. A rehabilitation proposal to improve the area announced three years ago has not materialized. INDAY GARCIA

Antipolo vows to bring back splendor of Taktak falls

By Niña Calleja

CAN IT still live up to the song that invites us to take a dip in its subterranean waters?

Hinulugang Taktak, Antipolo City's waterfalls once known as a favorite summer picnic spot for weekend tourists, remains a shadow of its old splendor, despite improved tourist amenities in the city and rehabilitation plans announced three years ago.

On a hard day, a loud sound awakens visitors at the entrance of the sprawling 1.2-hectare recreation area.

When the heavens dropped by recently, the lagoon at the foot of the waterfalls was almost entirely covered in cream-white soap suds from upstream laundry and sewage water woes.

"This happens after long periods without rain. But after a rain shower, the garbage is flushed towards Manila Bay," said tourism-based, a maintenance worker at the park.

Hinulugang Taktak, named for the gushing waters of Taktak River and a 16th century legend about a church bell (tinatak, Tinulog) into the steep cascade, was declared a national historical shrine in 1990 by the National Historical Institute.

It was later listed as a protected area by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). In 2000, the local government and the DENR agreed to manage the area and work for its rehabilitation for three years.

The two agencies then announced plans to pool P300 million for the task. City Hall and the DENR then pledged P50 million each for the effort.

Far cry

Rains, however, would only point to the renowned swimming pool, newly built walkway and a tourism shop as the new changes.

The rehab, apparently, had not extended to the waterfalls.

Hinulugang Taktak today is a far cry from the tourist attraction once immortalized in the botany folk song "Bayo na Antipolo," which sings praises of a hamlet's paradise and a perfect spot to enjoy local treats like mangoes, rambutan and suman, a sticky rice delicacy.

Officials of the City Environment and Waste Management Office (CEWMO) said the DENR-personnel office admitted that the rehabilitation plan transpired in 2009 did not materialize.

"What P100 million?" CEWMO head Jocelyn Musngisngis and DENR-provincial officer chief Raymundo Cabanesas replied in separate interviews when the Inquirer asked them for updates.

Musngisngis said it was a proposal made three years ago that stemmed by lack funding due to changes in government personnel.

Since the signing of the 2009 agreement, no major accomplishments so far has been the creation of a local Protected Area Management Board currently chaired by Mayor Nito Leviste and the DENR regional director.

But while it may seem to be most doable solution for now for greenhouse gases, the lagoon has become a dumping ground for many people living upstream because they think that Taktak River is a dump.

"Our hands are tied. We cannot intervene fully in the rehabilitation because DENR will has the upper hand," Leviste said.

Hopeful

"We Crisostomos is hopeful. "The river is not yet dead. I can still see small fish from time to time."

Musngisngis said her office submitted a proposal recently to Congress for the construction of a P15-million facility that can "cleanse the water flowing in the waterfall."

Still, technology can only offer a short-term solution. "The long-term goal is to educate the people and make them care for the river," Musngisngis said.

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METRO BRIEFS

Woman dead in jeep holdup

A 41-YEAR-OLD entrepreneur died when she refused to give her bag to robbers inside a jeepney late Thursday afternoon on Roosevelt Avenue, Quezon City, Police said Marilyn Chua of Rosario (Pateros) Montalbani, Rizal, was shot in the chest and was declared dead on arrival at St. Agnes Hospital. One of the three suspects, Jhon Cenares, 22, was arrested by barangay officials, who responded upon hearing the gunshot. Nancy C. Carvajal

Cooperatives meet today

TUPAS Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri, former Sen. Agapito "Butz" Aquino and cooperators from across the country are gathering for one day with at least 50,000 delegates from various cooperatives in a "National Show of Force" today, Feb. 18, to celebrate the 50th declaration of 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives. The event will take place from 3-6 p.m. at Quezon Memorial Circle (QMC). There will be a press conference at 7 p.m. on Coconut House inside QMC. For details, call Cirilo Jimlo Lim at 02-9107611, 0917-5369452 and 0921-5614803

Guards accused of leaving inmates to die, shooting others in inferno

COMAYAGUA, Honduras—Survivors of a Honduran prison fire that killed more than 350 inmates accused guards of leaving inmates to die inside their cells and shooting at others who tried to escape the flames.

"It was total chaos. People were running for their lives, shots were being fired. People were being burned alive," said prison chaplain Reynaldo Moncada, who arrived at the scene shortly after the conflagration broke out.

Most of the prison inmates had not even been convicted of a crime before the huge blaze consthrough Comayagua National Penitentiary on Tuesday night.

Reynaldo Sanchez, a convicted murderer serving a 16-year sentence, awoke as the blaze started. He escaped his cell block and said he watched guards firing at other inmates trying to escape from one of the worst prison fires in history.

"It was hell here, seeing your friends, people you have known awhile, burn alive," said Sanchez.

Sanchez complained the fire brigade did not come to the jail. house he more than half an hour, while other survivors said guards ignored the cries for help.

On Thursday evening, an eyewitness video made by a prison worker that was widely shown in others confirmed that police were firing inside the facility.

Prison guards denied they had stopped inmates from escaping.

Honduras' director of police intelligence, Hales Madrid, said the fire broke out in Module 18 due to a fight over a mattress between two inmates, one of whom set it on fire. All but four of more than 800 prisoners in the block died, he said.

But some victims' relatives and the government had been

BACKDROPPED by coffins, a relative of an inmate killed in the Comayagua prison waits to recover the remains of her loved one. —

grossly negligent or had even planned the blaze. An anonymous caller called breakdown HCH, charging that guards set the fire after a failed escape bid by inmates.

Honduras is the most murderous country in the world, ravaged by violent street gangs, rampant police corruption, dysfunctional courts and brutal drug cartels.

Back in the gangs' country, that Honduran may be locked up simply for ignoring various mandates with a gang.

Some of the 600 prisoners at the overcrowded jail managed to find their way to safety through the tin roofs of the complex, a dark, maze-like structure with narrow open-air hallways lined with rebar and blue brick walls.

But 359 of the prisoners could not escape the inferno, according to the attorney general's office.

One guard, Santerson Ordóñez, told Reuters it took time to open the cells because the duty officer had left the keys in a locked safe that guards needed special permission to open.

More than half the inmates had not been convicted and were awaiting trial, a rate even worse than the national average of 40 percent, according to Supreme Court figures.

Loreina Machado came to see her husband, who survived the blaze and has yet to be given a total hearing after six months inside.

"They're all corrupt, let us in," the 27-year-old woman screamed toward the prison, where about half the inmates remain. "They never want to tell us anything because they don't want us to know the truth. They kill you for saying the truth here."

Claudia Sierra, a social worker who visits the jail, said some inmates had been waiting up to three years for a hearing.

A local fire chief swallowed the prison authorities, saying they had stopped his crews from entering the burning prison for half an hour.

"These people in the prisons have their protocols, and while these are going on, they don't let anybody in," Jaime Omar Silva told El Heraldo newspaper.

For many hours after the blaze, groups of police and officials dragged out the charred remains of inmates in black body bags and hurled them onto a pile outside.

"The corpses are charred and some of them are stuck on top of each other," said Johnny Ordonez, a soldier hugging the dead. "You have to peel them apart like an orange."

Inside the gutted complex, the smell of charred flesh hung heavily in the air on Wednesday night. One scorched body lay face down on the floor, both legs pulled up close to the dead position, with its arms outstretched into the corner of the cell.

On Thursday, a few remaining bereaved family members thronged around the prison trying to get information.

Loaded on trailers, the dead were sent to a morgue in the capital, Tegucigalpa, where about 200 relatives are up cross to prepare for a long wait.

"It seems cruel, it will be impossible to identify them because they are completely burned," said Gamelia Pereyra, an official at the attorney general's office.

Forensic experts asked family members to identify any distinguishing characteristics of their next of kin, like tattoos or birthmarks, in the hopes of speeding up the process.

Delmich Argueta, 31, waited outside the morgue for word of her missing son Luis, who was serving time for homicide.

"I'm not going to leave here until they give me my son, even if he's in pieces and all wrapped up," she said.

Officials say they have pulled 103 bodies from the jail where the 852 prisoners were packed way over capacity.

Honduran authorities said the prison was built for 400, but prison chaplain Moncada said it was more by just 250. Reuters

WORLD BRIEFS

German president could lose immunity

BERLIN—Prosecutors requested on Thursday that Germany's Parliament strip the country's embattled president of his immunity from prosecution, saying they had "factual indications" of his long-suspected improper ties to business executives. The resulting scandal has become an ever-greater distraction for Chancellor Angela Merkel and her government. "The itemized prosecutor's office now has sufficient factual indications and therefore initial suspicions of the acceptance of favors," by President Christian Wulff, a statement released by prosecutors said. As a result, a request was made to "the president of the German Bundestag to lift the president's immunity." After the announcement, leading members of the opposition Social Democrats said the party would vote to end Wulff's immunity, while a top Green Party member called for the immediate resignation of Wulff, who first filtered to a member of the Christian Democratic Union. The scandal first emerged in December with the news that Wulff, while serving as governor of the state of Lower Saxony, had taken a private loan from the wife of a wealthy friend worth about $500,000. Recent attention has focused on Wulff's relationship with a film executive who was host to Wulff on vacations and whose company received loan guarantees from Lower Saxony. AFP,INQ

Camps agree to early poll in Maldives

ADDU, India—Rival factions in the Maldives agreed on Thursday to an early election to resolve the political crisis there, after Indian officials intervened. The country has been in turmoil since Feb. 7, when Mohamed Nasheed, the country's first democratically elected president, stepped down in disputed circumstances. No date was set for the new election, but representatives of Nasheed and the current president, Mohamadu Waheed Hassan, said that the voting could take place in a few months, rather than in October 2013 as originally scheduled. The Parliament would have to change the constitution to make the early election possible. AFP,INQ

'Underwear' bomber gets life in prison in US

DETROIT—A federal judge on Thursday sentenced a Nigerian man to life in prison for trying to blow up a US airliner bound for Detroit on Christmas Day in 2009 with a bomb hidden in his underwear. "This was an act of terrorism that cannot be sublimated with," said US District Judge Nancy Edmunds, who imposed the maximum sentence allowed. Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, 25, showed no emotion when Edmunds pronounced the sentence, sitting with his hands clasped under his chin. Witnesses testing on the witness of this attack at the December 2009. The bomb caused a fire but failed to explode on a Delta Airlines flight from Amsterdam carrying 289 people on Dec. 25. He was quickly subdued by passengers and crew and the fire extinguished. Since then, US officials have sought to bolster airport security, deploying full-body scanners to try to detect explosives. Reuters

Study: Western pupils lag Asians by three years

SYDNEY—Western schoolchildren are up to three years behind those in China's Shanghai and success in Asian education is not just the product of country "type" parents, an Australian report released on Friday said. The study by Independent Think-tank The Grattan Institute said East Asia was the center of high performance in schools with four of the world's top systems in the region—Hong Kong, South Korea, Shanghai and Singapore. "In Shanghai, the average 15-year-old mathematics student is performing at a level two to three years above his or her counterpart in Australia, the USA and Europe," Grattan's school education program director Ben Jensen said. "That has profound consequences, as economic power is shifting from West to East, high performance is not static in, the." AFP

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Climate change may be expected to intensify from here on out, and natural calamities will continue to challenge local governments and communities in the region. **However, devastations need not paralyze governments – local or national – nor come with tremendous human cost.**

The first Mindanao Summit on Disaster Risk Reduction and Geo-Hazard Awareness **will gather the experiences, insights, and expertise of participants from different fields. The goal is to kickstart a comprehensive plan of action for the** national and local governments and communities, to implement, facilitate, and coordinate preparation and response efforts for future calamities.

With foresight and vigilance, we can meet these challenges.

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- Sen. Loren B. Legarda
- Hon. Andrew Byrne (Minister and Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Australia)
- Sec. Corazon "Dinky" Soliman (DSWD)

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Kapit-bisig nating palakasin ang Mindanao.

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The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Greco

Italy plans to tax Catholic Church on commercial property

ROME—Over the years, the Italian government has quietly passed scores of laws that benefit the Roman Catholic Church, but it is now fast to insist in a public statement announcing it intends to strip the Church of privileges.

The government of Prime Minister Mario Monti took that step on Wednesday, telling the European Commission that it intends to change Italian law to ensure the Church pays property tax on the parts of its buildings used for commercial ends.

The Church owns vast amounts of property in Italy, and the move is attractive making sure that revenues that other bed and breakfast or church buildings that rent space to shops pay their full share of taxes.

The change—seen it is formally drafted and approved by Parliament—could result in revenues of 9000 million to 2.63 billion annually, according to municipal government associations. It could also set an example for other debt-strapped European countries, analysts notably Greece and Spain—where there is growing popular resentment over tax breaks for the Church.

Even in Catholic Italy, the proposal draws the challenging Monti's ability to end the national mood. Faced with their own belt-tightening and tax increases, Italians are increasingly fed up with what they see as unfair privileges—he's of the political class or the Church. After new austerity measures were passed in December, 150,000 people signed an online petition calling on the government to revoke the Church's tax-exempt status.

"It was time they paid, too, with all the exemptions they've had throughout the years," said Mario Catalano, 58, a shopkeeper in Rome, who said he goes to church twice a month. "They own the most beautiful buildings in downtown Rome, no bellos ed, and rent them out at market prices. They don't give them for free or as low prices for charity."

Today, many church buildings fall into a gray area, taking advantage of a tax exemption for religious organizations' buildings even if they are largely commercial in use.

In a statement to Joaquin Almunia, the vice president of the European Commission, the government said it would revoke the tax exemption for Church property whose commercial use is "not only incidental but also prevalent." **New York Times News Service**

General Assembly votes to condemn Syrian leader

UNITED NATIONS—The 193-nation UN General Assembly ratcheted up the pressure on Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on Thursday by overwhelmingly approving a resolution that endorses an Arab League plan calling for him to step aside.

BASHAR AL-ASSAD

"Today the UN General Assembly sent a clear message to the people of Syria—the world is with you," UN Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice said in a statement.

"An overwhelming majority of 133 member states have backed the plan put forward by the Arab League to end the suffering of Syrians," she said. "Bashar al-Assad has never been more isolated."

The resolution, similar to one Russia and China vetoed in the Security Council on Feb. 4, received 137 votes in favor, 12 against and 17 abstentions, although three countries said their votes failed to register on the electronic board.

Russia and China were among those opposing the resolution, which was drafted by Saudi Arabia and submitted by Egypt on behalf of Arab states. Unlike in the Security Council, there is no veto in the General Assembly, but its decisions lack the legal force of council resolutions.

The resolution told the assembly "fully supports" the Arab League plan aimed at halting Syria's 11-month crackdown on anti-Assad demonstrators and urges UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to appoint a special envoy to Syria.

It also condemns Damascus for "widespread and systematic violations of human rights" and calls for the withdrawal of forces from towns and cities. The United Nations says more than 5,400 civilians have been killed in the uprising.

Syrian Ambassador Bashar Ja'afari rejected the resolution, telling the assembly it was part of a plot to overthrow Syria's government and allow the "terrorist" opposition to take over the country.

"We have deep concern in relation to the real intentions of the countries that have cosponsored the draft, particularly that those countries are leading a political and media aggression against Syria," he said.

Their countries, Ja'afari said, are providing "all media, financial and political support to the armed terrorist groups and to creating false coverage to international fora."

Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said the resolution "reflects the worrying trend ... to attempt to isolate the Syrian leadership, to reject any contact with it and to impose an ultimatum for results for political settlement."

Churkin offered Moscow's sympathy to those who "have suspected that it was anybody's unshakable intention to succeed in achieving a quick solution to the Syrian crisis," and the appeals that violence should be stopped immediately should expire a strong support."

"However, one-sided pressure can't help in seeking a negotiated settlement of the Syrian crisis," it wrote. Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhai Jun arrives in Syria on Friday as part of Beijing's own diplomatic efforts to end the crisis.

Earlier this week, Arab countries withdrew their observers from Damascus in the crackdown after they failed to stop the violence.

Western diplomats said before the vote that a large majority is in favor of the resolution would increase the pressure on Assad to comply with the Arab League plan, and would highlight the isolation of Russia and China on the issue.

Iran, North Korea, Venezuela and Bolivia were among other countries that voted against the resolution. **Reuters**

Cameron details reasons vs Scottish independence

LONDON—Arguing that the centuries-old "ties that bind" Britain together were under threat from Scottish separatists, British Prime Minister David Cameron traveled to Edinburgh on Thursday to meet with Scots First Minister Alex Salmond in effort who soon here to the first opening team of a longer battle over an independence referendum.

But the meeting suggested just how divisive the dispute could be, with the two leaders casting the results of the talks in starkly different tones.

Salmond said the talks had "moved on quite substantially," and that the next had narrowed the areas of disagreement. The Associated Press reported. But Cameron said there "on the issue of independence, separating Scotland, leaving the United Kingdom, I am afraid there wasn't much progress."

The meeting came after months of maneuvering, with Salmond seeing he had been unable to get Cameron to agree on talk. In the end, Cameron coupled the meeting with a speech in Edinburgh in which he reached out directly to the Scottish people, laying his pragmatic arguments on the financial and political advantages of the union with emotional appeals.

"I say 300 percent clear that I will fight with everything I have to keep our United Kingdom together," Cameron said. "To me, this is not some issue of policy or strategy or calculation—it matters that much," Salmond said. Our friend home to under threat, and everyone who cares about it needs to speak out."

The meeting was the first since Salmond, whose Scottish National Party triumphed in election last year, took an initial formal step last month toward a referendum on Scotland's fate. His government hopes to secure a mandate for Scotland's withdrawal from the United Kingdom within as little as five years.

But Cameron and other British leaders say they have the power to decide whether there should be a referendum and how one should be conducted, and they dispute many of the terms Salmond is seeking for the ballot.

Salmond has suggested late 2014 as a time for a referendum and would people as young as 16 to be able to vote, two years younger than at present. He is also pressing for the referendum to pose two separate questions to establish whether voters want independence, possibly enhanced autonomy or neither.

But Cameron, who fears a vote for autonomy will pave the way to independence, is seeking a yes or no vote on whether Scotland should break away. He also wants to restrict data for the ballot—apparently in effort to limit the ability of Salmond, a formidable campaigner, to win over skeptical Scots. Opinion polls in recent years have suggested that a majority of Scots favor independence, and many of them are fearful of financial upheaval if they break away. **New York Times News Service**

Eastern Europe cold snap kills over 600 people

BUCHAREST, Romania—More than 600 people in Eastern Europe have died during a record-breaking cold snap, authorities said on Wednesday, as officials in the Czech Republic blamed two massive car pile-ups on blinding snow.

Since the end of January, the region has been plunged by the chilling freeze, which has brought the heaviest blizzards in recent memory, trapped thousands behind walls of snow, and left officials struggling to reach out to the vulnerable. Authorities in Russia and Ukraine alone said on Wednesday they had rescued more than 300 people since the beginning of February.

Some hundred damaged were blocked a major highway in the Czech Republic connecting the capital, Prague, with the eastern part of the country and Slovakia. Seven people were injured in the two accidents, authorities said, warning it could be hours before the damaged vehicles are cleared.

In land-hit Romania, more 25,000 people remain isolated in 223 remote communities where more than one week of heavy snowfall has blocked roads and wrecked havoc on the rail network.

IN THIS ISSUE

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■ **US jobs, factory data** strengthen growth outlook /B2-3

Editor Raul O. Marcelo ● Assistant Editor Carmie S. Mariano

BUSINESS

'Hot money' inflow slowed in January

Global economic uncertainty worries investors

By Michelle V. Remo

THE FLOW of portfolio investments to and from the Philippines fell in January as both local and foreign fund owners adopted a cautious stance in the wake of a prolonged debt crisis in the Europe and the continued weakness in the US economy.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said investor sentiment was dampened by an uncertain outlook on the global economy, which many believed would be dragged by the crisis in the Western region led by the debt woes of Greece.

Documents from the Bangko Sentral showed that inflow of foreign portfolio investments amounted to $1.2 billion in January, down 39 percent from $1.5 billion in the same month last year.

On the other hand, outflow of portfolio investments reached $627.21 million, down 53 percent from $1.34 billion over the same period.

As the decline in the outflow outpaced the drop in the inflow, the country still registered a net inflow of foreign portfolio investments of $566 million during the month, up more than 200 percent from $179 million.

"Investments and cashiers were lower compared to last year as investors remained cautious due to renewed worries over Greece's debt problems and the cut by the International Monetary Fund of its [global] growth outlook," the Bangko Sentral said in a statement.

In January, fears of a potential default by Greece rose as policymakers were still debating restructuring options. Public protests against proposed austerity measures in Greece, which needed to implement such measures to get a bailout package, complicated matters.

A cut in credit ratings of some euro zone economies also dampened the overall outlook on the global economy.

Bangko Sentral documents further showed that the inflow of foreign fund owners in January came mainly from the United Kingdom, Singapore, the United States, Luxembourg and Hong Kong.

The inflow in the form of investments in equities benefited mainly banks and telecommunications, holding utility and property firms.

Net investments in securities listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange amounted to $169 million; in peso-denominated government securities, $199 million; in money market instruments, $300,000; and in pure time deposits, $1 million.

$3-B investments in sewerage projects seen

By Ross T. Chuhuruba

THE PHILIPPINES is set to get about $3 billion in investments to water sewerage projects alone and is keen on public-private partnership projects for new water sources besides major lines.

This was disclosed by Ramon Alikpala, chair of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, during the Japan External Trade Organization workshop on private-public partnership (PPP) projects organized in cooperation with the DFA here.

Metro Manila's water services concessionaires Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. will invest the $3 billion under their current concession programs, Alikpala said. Asked whether the government would still consider developing the Laiban dam project in Rizal, for which San Miguel Corp. had submitted an unsolicited proposal, Alikpala said it was still one of the options but the scale might be different.

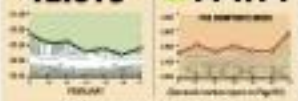
The project was initially estimated to produce 1,600 million liters a day. Alikpala said several other new water sources were also being considered, including the Pampanga River.

(14) INVESTMENTS (C)

INDICATORS

PESO-DOLLAR RATE
Feb. 17, 2012
42.615

STOCK MARKET
Feb. 17, 2012
▲114.14



Stocks surge to record high

THE LOCAL stock index yesterday skyrocketed to a new record as it hit all-time high of 5,093.71, gaining 114.14 points or 2.4 percent. The local index also touched a new intra-day high of 5,099.99. This marked the local stock market's best single-day performance since Oct. 7, 2011, when it surged by 5.1 percent. Since the start of this year, the PSEi has gained 11.5 percent.

"There was a spillover of positive sentiment into the Philippine market as favorable US data and some progress in Greece increased appetite for equities," said Manny Labrona, deputy chief of FNB Securities. "We can expect some follow-through buying in the next few sessions and should view corrections as opportunities to accumulate."

"PSEi at 5,000 is on the horizon. Earnings of issues are all encouraging, led by PSE, which may have a good dividend payout this year," said Ramon Sarao, president of local stock brokerage PTE & Co.

PSE president Hans Sicat added that hopes lived to a second bailout for Greece as well as positive data on the US jobs and housing markets boosted investing following liquid markets' movement in the past days.

"Strong corporate and local fundamentals have, in turn, pushed the market further as the gains are posted [yesterday] topped the other market indices in Asia," Sicat said.

STORIES BY

Power Situation Outlook
for Saturday, 18 February 2012

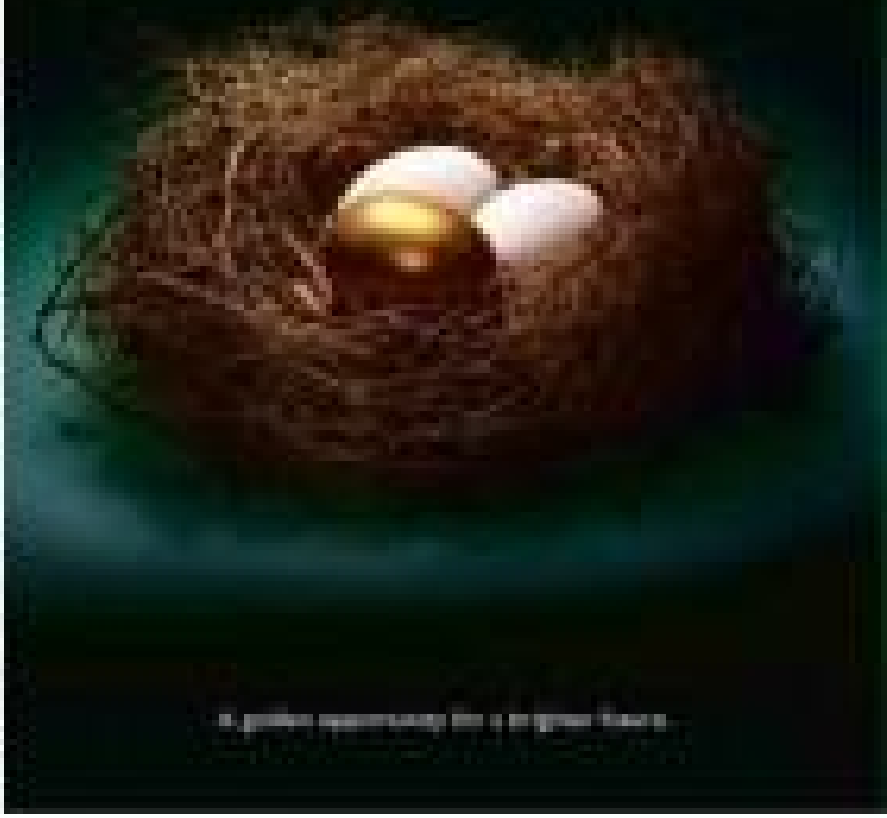
	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao
Available Capacity (MW)	8,519	1,617	1,147
System Peak (MW)	5,801	1,261	1,216
Gross Reserve (MW)	2,507	356	-69

Revaluation of forex reserves ruled sought

PH export growth

Singapore's DBS Group sees mo

Manulife



h expected to remain sluggish in 2012

elpa growing by only 1.3%

PAL posted net loss of $53M in Oct-Dec

introducing the new

Affluence MAX GOLD

NO MEDICAL

Manulife

For your future

SM to appeal gov't decision on ECC application

Atlas subsidiary's profit surged in P1.9B in 2011

BUSINESS

SM Prime posts 15% jump in 2011 net profit to P9.1B

4 China malls contribute P889M in income

By Doris C. Dumlao

SM Prime Holdings Inc. grew its net profit last year by 15 percent to P9.1 billion on sustained growth in retail revenues and expanded capacity from new malls.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, the country's largest shopping mall developer said retail revenues for the year rose 12 percent to P26.9 billion. Cash flow as measured by earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (Ebitda) jumped 16 percent to P14.3 billion for an Ebitda margin of 53 percent.

The results included the operations of four SM malls in China, which are located in the cities of Xiamen and Jinjiang in southern China, Chengdu in central China, and Suzhou in eastern China, the disclosure said.

SM Prime, led by the family of tycoon Henry Sy, attributed the results to a mix of expanded capacity from new malls in the Philippines that opened in 2010 and 2011 and the same-store retail growth of 7 percent. In addition, SM Prime said its four shopping malls in China sustained their robust growth, with net revenue doubling to P889 million last year from a year ago.

A tighter grip on operating expenses through the use of innovative energy conservation methods likewise contributed to the company's rise in profits, the disclosure said.

"SM Prime's resourceful performance in 2011, which was achieved in spite of tempered economic progress, clearly shows that the business formula the company has adopted is resilient and built for sustainable growth. Now that there is better optimism on the country's prospects, the company is even more eager to pursue its growth and expansion plans, as a fitting tribute to all our stakeholders, who we sincerely thank for loyally supporting us all through these years," SM Prime president Hans Sy said.

For the full year, SM Prime's consolidated rental revenues contributed 40 percent to the total and grew 14 percent to P12.8 billion. New rental space came from SM City malls in Tarlac, San Pablo, Calamba, Novaliches and Manila; Centennial, the new malls added 280,000 square meters to the company's total gross floor area and presently registers an average occupancy rate of 97 percent.

Cinema ticket sales likewise increased by 10 percent due to popular movies shown during the period. The major blockbusters were "Transformers 3: Dark of the Moon," "Pirates: Stranger Tides," "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2," "Sex Other Women" and "Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Obsession 1."

Sun Life mutual funds grow to P21.46B

GLOBAL insurance giant Sun Life of Canada grew its mutual fund business in the Philippines by a double-digit rate last year despite the turbulent global financial markets.

Sun Life Asset Management Co. Inc. (SLAMC), the mutual fund arm of Sun Life Financial-Philippines, thus ended last year with P21.46 billion in assets under management, 13 percent higher than a year ago. It also reported a 16-percent increase in gross sales to P11.99 billion.

Melvin Penos, SLAMC chief operating officer, said that 2011 was a good year for the company even with the global challenges. "We're not how the country remained resilient and persevering. There are substantial underlying trends in terms of investments and I am happy to note that our fund's portfolio grew well," she said.

SLAMC manages the Sun Life Prosperity Funds, which include the peso-denominated funds and two dollar-denominated funds. These are the Bond Fund, Balanced Fund, Dbl Equity Fund, Money Market and GS (Government Securities) Funds; the Dollar Advantage Fund and the Dollar Abundance Fund.

In terms of returns for peso-denominated funds, the bond fund led the pack as of end-2011 with a one-year return of 8.1 percent, followed by the GS Fund with 6.7 percent. For the dollar-denominated funds, Dollar Abundance Fund took the lead with a one-year yield 5.6 percent.

In terms of assets under management, the Sun Life Prosperity Balanced Fund was the biggest as of end-2011 at 3967 billion, followed by Phl Equity Fund with P5.04 billion.

Mutual funds were created by financial experts for people who may not have the time or expertise to create and actively manage an investment portfolio. An investor who buys a share in the mutual fund gets the same percentage of return as one who acquires a bigger share and is widely expected to benefit from diversification and professional portfolio management.

Considering the resilience of the Philippine economy amid the US economic downturn and a European debt crisis and the healthy growth of the funds, Penos said SLAMC would continue to steer efforts to encourage more Filipinos to invest in mutual funds.

BUSINESS

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Century Group approves entry of foreign investors

Property firm's public float to increase to 17.5% from 3%

By Doris C. Dumlao

PROPERTY developer Century Properties Group Inc. has approved the sale of P2.25 billion worth of shares to foreign investors.

CPG disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange on Friday that its principal shareholder, Century Properties Inc., sold 1.35 billion common shares to offshore investors at P1.75 per share.

The transfer will widen CPG's public float to 17.5 percent from the current 3 percent, thereby complying with the 10-percent minimum public ownership required by the PSE to remain listed on its bourse.

The stake held by the property developer's controlling shareholder, CPI, which in turn is owned by the Asiatico family, will go down from 97 percent to 82.5 percent.

Shares of CPG last fallen by 12.82 percent to P1.82 per share, making the day's main index rally to record highs—by the time trading ist the stock was halted at 2:45 pm on Friday.

The company's shares tumbled as the planned private placement was priced at a discount to market price and at the low end of the indicative price range P1.75 and P2.25 per share.

Trading on CPG will resume on Monday to give investors time to digest CPG's disclosure about the private placement.

Half of the proceeds will be used by CPG for working capital while half will be earmarked for landbanking, the company's disclosure said.

The equity placement will be done through a top-up offer, which means that the principal shareholder will sell some of its secondary shares to bring in new investors, but CPG will later on issue the same amount of primary shares to the principal stockholder at the same price. The principal stockholder is thus only lending some of its shares to execute a quicker equity deal instead of going through the more tedious process of applying for registration of new securities.

In while the initial stage of the deal involves a secondary shares offering, new money will effectively flow in the company as the seller will afterwards buy the same amount of primary shares at the same price.

UBS AG was mandated as the sole global coordinator and bookrunner for the transaction, while UBS AG and Macquarie Capital Ltd. were appointed joint bookrunners.

CPG plans invest up to P8.3 billion this year to boost development on its master-planned projects as well as to break ground on new ventures.

The company has four ongoing master-planned developments: Century City in Makati City, Cerysse Ranch in Cavite, Asiare Urban Residences in Pasig City and Acqua Residences in Mandaluyong City.

ICTSI invests $2.5M in Baltic Container Terminal

By Paolo G. Montecillo

INTERNATIONAL Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) continues to improve and modernize its operations around the world as it seeks to strengthen its overseas presence.

In a statement Friday, the Manila-based port operator said it had installed a new container scanner worth $2.5 million at the Baltic Container Terminal (BCT).

"The investment is expected to increase security and safety of the port, reduce service time and advance the terminal's overall performance," the company said. The new piece of equipment was installed in cooperation with the Bureau of Customs Office, ICTSI said.

The BCT operates the container terminal in Gdynia, Pomerania, Poland. BCT won its 20-year concession contract for the facility in 2003.

The Port of Gdynia is one of the largest passenger and cargo terminals in the Southern Europe's Baltic Sea.

"BCT and the Port of Gdynia have been pioneers in the integration of modern port solutions, and this investment by the Customs Office is a continuation of this commitment," BCT president Enrique Ireta-Moreno said.

"Thanks to the modern scanner, Gdynia cements its position as among the most modern, safest and efficient seaports in the part of the world," he said.

The dual-energy Rapiscan G-60 scanner now housed at the BCT shows the content of containers, and can distinguish organic substances from others, licensing of one container takes only six to eight minutes, significantly hastening customs clearance done at the terminal.

Headquartered in Manila, ICTSI is one of the world's leading port management companies, operating 22 marine terminals and port projects in 17 countries.

Australia expands road program coverage

By Konrad W. Dizon

THE AUSTRALIAN government has expanded the coverage of its funding program for provincial roads in the Philippines to include an additional three provinces, bringing the total to 21.

Australian Ambassador Bill Tweddell said in a statement that Aklan, Sorsogon and Lanao del Norte will now receive funding through its provincial road improvement facility (PRIF).

The five-year, A$109-million (some P4.5 billion to current exchange rates) program, which runs until 2014, is meant to help local governments in the Visayas and Mindanao to upgrade and then maintain their core road network.

Initially the program covered Bohol, Sorsogon, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental and Misamis Occidental.

Tweddell said that after showing early results, Australia decided to extend the program to another three provinces.

"Roads upgraded by the program are cutting transportation costs and increasing access of poor Filipinos to basic services, such as schools and health clinics," he said.

The bulk of the funds is earmarked for road rehabilitation and maintenance in the provinces, but the program also supports local government reforms to improve the quality and efficiency of delivering public services to communities.

Tweddell explained that provinces compete for extra resources through the program's incentive mechanism by progressing reforms in the key governance areas of planning and budgeting, procurement, internal audit, human resource development and increasing locally generated revenues.

"One partner provinces are building momentum and introducing good governance reforms," he said. "They are increasing their revenues to fund essential services in the poor rural their budgets are more transparent and allow for easier expenditure tracking."

So far, 14 road rehabilitation projects have been completed through the facility, benefiting some 51,000 people.

First announced in October 2008 following the signing of an agreement between Manila and Canberra, the facility is aimed at providing "by 2014 at least 4 million people better access to rehabilitated and maintained road networks, economic activity and public infrastructure and services that will improve their livelihood."

According to the embassy, materials will provide over P5 billion in development assistance to the Philippines during its current fiscal year that ends on June 30.

Editor Cesar O. Mangosing
SCIENCE/HEALTH

LEFT (FROM THE LEFT): Dr. Fernando Zegarra, MSD Asia-Pacific regional director for medical affairs, and Yu (far right) served as resource speakers during the forum. (MSD Asia-Pacific Media held in Tokyo. The news were joined by (from left) Dr. Fernando Zegarra, MSD Asia-Pacific regional director for medical affairs, and Yoshimi.

Hepatitis C no longer a 'death sentence'

Text and photos by Charles E. Bukas

BECAUSE HEPATITIS C symptoms often do not manifest themselves until the later stages of the illness, afflicted individuals are not likely to know that they have one, much more see a doctor to check for its presence.

However, by the time these symptoms have manifested, the disease is usually hard to cure if not irreversible.

Hepatitis C is a blood borne virus, mainly transmitted by sharing drug-injecting equipment, using a razor previously used by an infected person, through blood transfusions, or having sex with an infected individual.

Transmission can also occur via non-sterile tattooing and body piercing, unsterile medical or dental procedures, from mothers to infant during delivery or exposure to blood or blood product.

Because hepatitis C virus slowly damages the liver—often over the course of several decades—the result may eventually cause permanent scarring of the liver (cirrhosis). People with cirrhosis can go on to develop liver failure or liver cancer.

In fact, hepatitis C is four times more common than the human immunodeficiency virus in the United States and accounts for more than half of all patients with cirrhosis. It is also the most common indication currently for liver transplants, and it is the cause of about a third of primary cancers that arise within the liver in this country.

Only treatment

The only treatment for people with end-stage liver disease is a liver transplant.

"What's a win by the time the person realizes that he or she is already fatigued, has symptoms of liver failure, jaundice, has yellowing of the skin, whites of the eyes, and body fluids, has poor appetite, suffers from stomach and joint pains, has weaknesses in the area of the liver, his or her hepatitis C case might already be too tough to cure if not too late for any cure," explained Mitsuyoshi Yu, professor in the Kaohsiung Medical University and deputy secretary general of the Asian Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver.

This is why Yu has advocated for early screening, the best way to fight hepatitis C rather than the vaccine that is in process to prevention, unlike those for hepatitis A and B.

Education

"Until 1989, the medical profession didn't have a name for what we now call hepatitis C. But now that the disease is recognized as a leading cause of cirrhosis and liver cancer, we also find that education and awareness are more essential to its effective treatment," he said.

According to professor Sing Gee Lim of the Singapore National University Hospital, early liver symptoms of the liver do not to take any form of alcoholic drink or use illicit drug, or others might if his or she is obese, strict control of diabetes and compliance with any other therapies his or her doctor puts in place.

There is now the availability of treatment option for those suffering from chronic hepatitis C.

Last year, Merck Sharp & Dohme introduced into the market boceprevir (Victrelis), the first new drug for hepatitis C in 20 years.

New class

"Boceprevir is a new class of hepatitis drug belonging to protease inhibitors, which block the enzyme required for the hepatitis virus to replicate. With this new drug, we would now regard hepatitis C from a debilitating disease into a manageable condition for the majority of people infected with the virus," said Dr. Gina Dedonato, MD, global director of scientific affairs.

The drug, which is approved only for use in conjunction with the current hepatitis C drugs, peginterferon alpha and ribavirin, was found to nearly double the number of patients who achieved what is known as a sustained virologic response—otherwise known as cure—in patients with new hepatitis C infections.

It tripled the response rate in those for whom prior therapy had failed.

In two clinical trials reported in the New England Journal of Medicine, the combination of boceprevir, peginterferon alpha and ribavirin produced a sustained virologic response in as many as 66 percent of patients, compared with a response of only 38 percent in patients who received only peginterferon alpha and ribavirin.

Among patients in which previous therapies had failed, the combination produced a sustained response in one group and a 66 percent response in a second group, compared with a 21 percent response rate in those who received the current therapy.

Bacterial contamination in lagundi cough products

THE GOVERNMENT program has been actively promoting the use of indigenous herbs, aside, medicinal preparations. The Department of Health (DOH) has approved 13 medicinal plants as source of products that could treat most common ailments in the country. These 13 are akapulko, ampalaya, bawang, bayabas, lagundi, oregon oregon, sambong, tsaang gubat and yerba buena.

The National Integrated Research Program of the Medicinal Plants (NIRPMP) of the University of the Philippines Manila is in the forefront of researches on these medicinal plants and local drug companies usually seek its assistance in coming up with the right formulation process for these herbal preparations.

In previous columns, we have supported this program as a means of providing affordable, effective and safe medicines that can treat common medical problems encountered by Filipinos.

Warning

However, lately, we must have all heard of the commercial on radio and television wherein the celebrity host warns the public of significant bacterial contamination of some natural products lately being exported to other underdeveloped countries like Nigeria and Africa, but I was quite confident that our local FDA is much more stringent in ensuring that GMP (Good Manufacturing Procedures) is followed by all manufacturers of these medicinal pharmaceutical products.

All manufacturers must get a GMP certification from the FDA before they could be allowed to manufacture any product. GMP provides strict measures to ascertain that the plant materials are subjected to optimum processing conditions to prevent bacterial and fungal contamination and that the active ingredients extracted from the medicinal plant could be preserved over a period of time for sustained effectiveness of the herbal product.

The 1% commercial got my interest and I looked at the manufacturer's date being referred to by the celebrity host, and see whether his claim was valid or not.

Random sampling

Samples of these lagundi products were bought at random from local drug stores and were subjected to laboratory tests to ascertain

US jobs, factory data strengthen growth outlook

New unemployment claims drop 13,000, near four-year low

WASHINGTON—The number of Americans filing for new unemployment benefits unexpectedly fell to a near-four-year low last week, suggesting the labor market recovery was quickening.

Other data on Thursday showing solid expansion in factory activity in the Mid-Atlantic area (the fourth and third-biggest manufacturing region) pointed to new residential projects in January offered more evidence of a sustained momentum in the economy.

"The numbers add to the belief that the economy is shifting gears. There is just no question that we're going to see a whole lot of trouble, except for consumer spending," said Joel Naroff, chief economist at Naroff Economic Advisors in Holland, Pennsylvania.

The report was the latest to come on the heels of fairly upbeat data and could prompt economists to further temper expectations of a sharp moderation in growth in the first quarter. Economists have also dialed down their expectations for another round of bond buying or quantitative easing by the Federal Reserve. Initial claims for state unemployment benefits dropped 13,000 to a seasonally adjusted 348,000, the lowest level since March 2008, the labor department said.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast claims rising to 365,000. The four-week average of new claims, seen as a better measure of labor market trends, was the lowest since April 2008.

In a separate report, the Philadelphia Federal Reserve Bank said its business activity index rose to 10.2 this month from 7.2 in January as orders and shipments jumped.

Though factories in the region covering eastern Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware hired fewer workers this month, they increased hours for existing employees, which bodes well for wage growth.

In addition, order backlogs are rising and factories are taking a bit longer to make deliveries.

"We are not seeing much inflation, but growth has changed from the fourth quarter of 2012 to the first quarter of 2013," said Dan Meckstroth, senior economist at IHS Financial Services in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The economy grew at a 0.1 percent annual pace in the last three months of 2012, with its contraction accounting for two-thirds of the rise. That left economists worrying businesses will have little appetite to add more stocks with demand not that strong.

But more data cast solid the recovery.

The Commerce Department reported that housing starts rose 11.1 percent to an annual rate of 890,000 units last month, beating economists' expectations for a 0.925,000-unit pace.

Shares were boosted by real estate buildings, reflecting growing demand for rental apartments as investors move away from homeownership.

Markets for future home construction rose 0.7 percent to a 676,000-unit pace in January. Home building is expected to add to economic growth this year for the first time since 2005.

The data amid rising hopes for a deal on a second bailout package for Greece buoyed US stocks, with the broader Standard & Poor's 500 index heading a nine-month high.

US Treasury debt prices fell while the dollar rallied against the yen.

The data on employment, manufacturing and retail sales have also raised doubts on whether the US central bank will keep its pledge to hold interest rates at ultra-low levels at least as long as unemployment remains above 6.5 percent. The Fed made its low rate commitment before January's employment report was released.

Minutes of the Fed's Jan. 29-30 meeting released on Wednesday showed a few policymakers believed a final round of quantitative easing would be needed this year to support the US economy.

"Fed policy looks more and more at odds with a brighter-looking economic outlook," said Chris Rupkey, chief financial economist at Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ in New York. "Our guess is this may not materialize until the Fed's unemployment rate dropped to a three-year low of 6.5 percent in January. Economists are cautiously optimistic that February will be another month of solid job gains." Reuters

Markets rise on Greece bailout hopes, US data

TOKYO—Asian shares rebounded on Friday on signs that euro-zone officials will soon approve a long-awaited bailout for Greece, and after jobs and factory data pointed to a health- ier US economy.

MSCI's broadest index of Asian-Pacific shares excluding Japan rose as much as 1.4 percent, recovering most of its losses suffered on Thursday when worries about a delay in signing a Greek deal sparked fears of a debt default.

Dutch Finance Ed the push, gaining 1.5 percent, as foreign investors returned to full force. The MSCI's pan-Asia index has stood up 1 percent by early afternoon, heading for a weekly gain of 1.5 percent and a year-on-year rise of more than 15 percent.

Japan's Nikkei rallied nearly 2 percent to six-month highs, with exporters and financials leading the gains.

"The markets have returned to a familiar pattern, with surprisingly robust US jobs data and growing optimism over Greece continuing to reverse the recent rally. There's a lot of excess liquidity still left for shares to digest," said Hiroichi Nishi, chief economist & derivatives analyst for Nomura.

The dollar rose to a 3-1/2-month high above 79 yen on Friday after the US data, adding fuel to its rally triggered earlier this week by the Bank of Japan's policy easing.

"Greenspan has heightened to encourage risk taking," said Masayuki Otsuka, senior market analyst at Sakurai Securities. "For very monetary-sensitive investments, with stock- or liquidity-injection yet decided later this month from the European Central Bank and expectations that a March default by Greece can be avoided spurring 'risk-on' investment, he said. Investors officials and on Thursday they were pursuing the Greek bailout deal for Greece for approval on Monday, with a focus on how Greece can prioritize debt repayment and ways to ensure Athens commits to reforms.

Reuters also said euro zone central banks had agreed on a Greek bond swap.

The risk of Athens entering a March 20 deadline to pay a 14.5 billion euro bond redemption payment appeared to have eased after a spokesman for the Greek government on Thursday that Greece expected to begin a debt swap scheme with private bondholders.

The CBOE Volatility index VIX, which measures expected volatility in the S&P 500 index over the next 30 days, plunged about 9 percent on Thursday for its biggest drop since Dec. 9. A drop in the index reflects rising risk appetite.

But some signs of strain remain.

The Markit iTraxx index of credit default spreads for European senior financials, meaning the cost of insuring against a bank defaulting on its debts, has risen by almost 16 basis points in the past 10 days to about 240 bps.

London copper recovered from Thursday's three-week low to rise 1.2 percent to $8,400 a ton. Spot gold was up 0.2 percent to $1,733 a oz, rising along with equities. Reuters

GM posts record profit of $7.6B

NEW YORK—General Motors on Thursday announced it made a record profit last year as sales growth in the United States and China helped the former Asian bank list the title of world's biggest automaker from Toyota.

Underscoring its return to health—just seven years after nearly declaring a massive government bailout and losing its longest-held spot—a humiliating bankruptcy—GM uncovered solid income profits more on the way.

GM's profit soared by 61 percent in 2011 to reach $7.6 billion, beating expectations and breaking records for the 105-year-old firm.

The maker of cars and trucks, whose portfolio of brands includes Chevrolet, Cadillac, Isuzu and Opel, said it would make home-sharing payments of up to $7,000 to US employees.

The profits appeared to provide further evidence of the success of President Barack Obama's controversial bailout for GM and Chrysler worth roughly $80 billion.

Meanwhile GM chief and chief executive Dan Akerson was forecast on Thursday's financial win.

"We grew the top and bottom lines, reinforced our global market shares and made strategic investments in our brands around the world," Akerson said in a statement.

"We will build on these results as we bring more new cars, crossovers and trucks to market, and make GM a far more efficient global team." AFP

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

NATIONAL HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE PHILIPPINES

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATIONS FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMITS (AEPTS)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
ORLE NCR Building, 864 Pelagian St., Manila, Philippines

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATIONS FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMITS (AEPTS)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permit(s):

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Worker/ Nationality	Position
FIRST GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY INC.	Martin Klein Hamberg / Dane	Sales Manager
SPLASH LEISURE INC.	Hyunsin Cho / Korean	General Manager
EUN SUK INC.	Jaeschol Kim / Korean	General Manager
LAND SOLUTION SYSTEMS, INC.	Rahul Vijay / Indian	Management Consultant
VIVA GLOBAL RESOURCES N.V. (PHILIPPINES)	Kevin Pradipta Hongjaya / Indonesian	Sales Agent
BRYLDEN INC.	Sheijian Yin / Chinese	Customer Service Representative / Assistant
BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO (PHILIPPINES) LIMITED	Adam Robert Bendixen / Australian	Marketing Head
ACADEMY 21 INSTITUTE INC.	Sandeep Oh / Korean	General Manager
EEEI PRODUCTS PHILIPPINES, INC.	Laurent Auguste Roger Pierlot / French	Vice President for Operations & Administration
ASTERWARE, INC.	Hikari Kondo / Japanese	Manager
ASTERWARE, INC.	Hirofumi Yamasaki / Japanese	Team Leader
HUAXIA FIBERHOME INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES CO., LTD.	Hui Liu / Chinese	Account Manager
HUAXIA FIBERHOME INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES CO., LTD.	Xiaosheng Jiang / Chinese	Sales Manager
HUAXIA FIBERHOME INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES CO., LTD.	Long Chen / Chinese	Customer Service Manager
HUAXIA FIBERHOME INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES CO., LTD.	Yi Liang / Chinese	Account Manager
HUAXIA FIBERHOME INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES CO., LTD.	Zhang Jie / Chinese	Assistant Project Manager
HUAXIA FIBERHOME INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES CO., LTD.	Jinsheng Jiang / Chinese	Account Manager
FAS ASIA INC. (PHILIPPINE BRANCH)	Khushiyar Rahman Chowdhury / Bangladeshi	President
SINOCOLA Philippines International Electronic Bus and Trading Company, Inc.	Zhongjie Tian / Chinese	Vice Purchasing Manager
SINOCOLA Philippines International Electronic Bus and Trading Company, Inc.	Yiping Liu / Chinese	Senior Purchasing Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned applications please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. ALAN N. MACARAYA, CESO III
Regional Director

(PDI – February 16, 2013)

Philippine Airlines

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CONTACT DETAILS

For minimum qualifications and documents required for each position, interested applicants may direct inquiries to:

Ms. Marilen C. Licerio
Office of the Sr. Assistant Vice President - Flight Operations
at tel. nos. 852-6031 and 855-8000
loc. 2305 or 2603
or, e-mail address:
les_licerio@pal.com.ph

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PLEASE SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS ON OR BEFORE FEBRUARY 27, 2012

Resumé w/ 2 X 2 Picture (Red Background)
Transcript of Records (photocopy)
College Diploma (photocopy)
Birth Certificate (photocopy)
CPL w/ IR, GI, FI, Radio License (photocopy)
Last 3 pages of the Logbook (photocopy)

TO:

Talent Acquisition, Management and Retention Division
Human Resources Department,
Philippine Airlines
2/F, PNB Financial Center
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Request for Expression of Interest for Hiring of Consultant to Produce the "PANTAWID GRO Ad Awareness"

1. Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), through its Operations Office (FO) 1, 2, 3, 4A, 4B, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, CARAGA, and National Capital Region (NCR), intends to engage the services of a consultant to produce the "PANTAWID GRO Ad Awareness" Campaign.
2. The National Advisory Council now calls for the submission of expressions of interest by qualified consultants for the "Hiring of Consultant to Produce the "PANTAWID GRO Ad Awareness" Campaign". The duration of the contract is for a period of 1 month. All interested consultants may obtain further information at the address given below during office hours from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
3. A consultant will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) procedures described in the Philippine Government Procurement Reform Act (RA 9184) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). Interested consultants may submit their application by delivering one (1) original and two (2) copies of their proposal to the address given below on or before 10:00 AM, 24 February 2012. Late applications will be rejected. Applications will be opened in the presence of the applicants' representatives who choose to attend.
4. The Terms of Reference (TOR) may be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) at www.philgeps.gov.ph. The TOR may also be downloaded from the DSWD website at www.dswd.gov.ph.
5. The evaluation of applications will be done in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) Procedures. Only the applications of those consultants short listed will be opened. The criteria for short listing are:
   a. Technical Proposal - Weighted Score (70%)
      1. Quality and relevance of capability / track record of the consultant (20%)
      2. Quality and experience of project team to deliver requirements contained in the TOR (30%)
      3. Quality of the methodology and methodology to be used (20%)
   b. Financial Proposal - 100% / Weighted Score (30%)
6. The contract shall be awarded within one (1) year.
7. The National Government reserves the right to reject any and all bids, and the right to annul the award at any time prior to contract award without incurring any liability, and waives its right to question the decision thereof.
8. For further information, please contact:

Bid Secretariat
Attn: Ms. Jeanette Cruz, Chairman
Bid Secretariat
DSWD Central Office
Batasan Complex, Quezon City
Tel. No. 931-8101 loc. 210

Undersecretary for Operations

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Requirement:

Must be 20-30 years old male
Must be able to read, write & speak English &
Tagalog & Mandarin/Cantonese/
Fookien
Knows how to drive & must have a valid driver's license
Familiarity around Metro Manila
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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given to the public that BIMLO CONSTRUCTION, a single proprietorship owned and operated by Engr. Reynaldo L. Pangal had changed its business name from Bimlo Construction to BIMLO CONSTRUCTION & SUPPLY as of January 13, 2012 per DTI Certificate No. 0109870.

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BNEW CONDO MANILA DAY

In Loving Memory of the late

Dra. Remedios Santos Gomez

(May 14, 1929 – February 8, 2012)
of Pasig City and San Francisco, California, U.S.A.

Passed away February 8, 2012 at the age of 82
at the University of California, San Francisco Medical Center.

Her remains lie at
The Evergreen Chapels And Crematory
in Pasig City.

Interment will be on Sunday, February 19, 2012
at The Evergreen Memorial Garden after
the 2:00 P.M. Mass.

Her bereaved brother **Renato**, and sisters **Virginia**, **Felicitacion**, **Josefina**, and **Ma. Aurora**, in-laws, nephews, nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Classifieds
More Classified Ads
Dept. of Agriculture B2-3
DOLE-NCR B2-3
NHCP B2-3

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die." John 11:25-26

LET US PRAY FOR THE ETERNAL REPOSE
of

† FR. ROMEO M. FLORALDE, OFM

1954 – 2012

Date of Birth	: June 2, 1954
Date of First Profession	: May 15, 1975
Date of Solemn Profession	: May 15, 1978
Date of Ordination	: October 28, 1978
Death	: February 15, 2012

His remains lie in state at Santuario de San Pedro Bautista, San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Monday (February 20, 2012) at La Loma Catholic Cemetery after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

"Look with mercy on him, who sought to fulfill his vows to you, and grant him the reward promised to all good and faithful servants."

May he rest in peace. Amen.

The much loved

Natividad Millar

passed away peacefully
surrounded by love on February 14
aged 99 years and 8 months.

Nati was one of the world's most caring, generous and humorous people. She had a true love for life and we are blessed to have had her with us as long as we did.

We thank her for all the love and support she gave us over many years. We love her with all of our hearts and her spirit lives on in us.

The Apostol-Armstrong Family
(Mina, Francis, Manny, Jani, Chris, Rachel, Julian, William, Oliver, Oscar and Coco)

Our Dearly Beloved Mommy

CAROLINA ALONSO VILLAMIL

Peacefully joined our Lord on February 16, 2012 at the age of 86.

Wife of Vicente; Mommy to Mina and Ella Rodriguez, Boy and Percy, Bob and Alice, Gladys, Lolo to Pipo and Pabo, Pete, Carlo, Kristo and Monta, Dolly, Eunice and Nancy; a sweet mother-in-law to Al, Anthony Edward and "Mommy" to many. Thank you for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Singalot Chapel, La Guardia Ste. Ana st., Pandacan City.

Cremation will be on Sunday, February 19, 2012 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." 2 Timothy 4

RIZALINA LEAÑO DIMALANTA

(Wife of the late Rafael Manansala Dimalanta)

December 10, 1922 – February 17, 2012

of Quezon City, Alabang and Las Piñas City

passed away peacefully at home on February 17, 2012.

Her body will lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Sucat, Parañaque City.

Cremation will be at the Loyola Crematorium on Sunday, February 19, 2012 at 11:00 a.m.

Interment to follow at St. James the Great Parish Church in Ayala Alabang Village.

Remembering
with fondness, our beloved

Hernando P. Zenarosa

on his 1st death anniversary,
February 18, 2012.

His family requests the pious reader to say a prayer for the repose of his soul.

Mass will be offered
at 10:00 a.m., on said date
at the Radio Veritas Chapel, Buick Street, Fairview, Quezon City.

Ridgewood Towers addresses the yuppies' housing needs

By Theresa S. Samaniego

THE BARRACKS where soldiers once sought refuge had been bustling with a different kind of revolution over the past several years.

And it was a good battle, as it involved what Time termed as a military headquarters into the world-class Bonifacio Global City—a bustling, contemporary block that housed office buildings, bars and restaurants, shops and even prime residential-level spaces.

However, like any other place that has undergone renovation/development, living in this side of the city often comes with quite a hefty price tag—one that usually comes away a number of prospective buyers.

Realizing the steep price that such developments command, property developer GI Mansions Development Corp. (G-I Group) took a bolder step by breaking this norm and providing individuals a better alternative through Ridgewood Towers.

"Living in a high-rise economy that hasn a prime address can be expensive or even an impossible dream for many that we want to make that dreams attainable through Ridgewood Towers," the company said.

Located within the 8GC complex, Ridgewood Towers may prove to be a possible option as it affords individuals the privilege of owning a condominium unit, with a prime address and at an affordable price.

"Ridgewood Towers is right across the Mckinley Hill, a very new development within the Global City and is strategically located at the heart of a thriving business and leisure district in Taguig, particularly within Bonifacio Uptown, along G3 Road northbound," said G-I Group marketing head Cindy De Costa.

3 high-rise buildings

Designed by Arga Designs & Partners, Ridgewood Towers is comprised of three high-rise buildings, each tower affording a view of the cityscape and its surrounding environs.

Tower 1 stands at 37 stories high, whose units have already been completely turned over to buyers. The second tower, also 37 stories high, was completed only recently, while the third and last tower, a 35-story structure, is still under construction.

The first two towers has 15 units per floor, while the third tower of 35 stories will have 18 units on each floor.

Target market

According to De Costa, the pricing of the units at the Ridgewood Towers has been aligned with the company's objective to address the housing needs of the "new breed of dynamic, driven and ambitious young professionals."

"The vital market is the expanding middle class—Filipino expatriate workers and local young professionals who seek the natural means and with their own ideas, preferences and taste for condominium living instantly available only to the upper class," De Costa explained.

This market niche, she added, "are the kind of success-oriented people who wants great value for their money while at the same time desire the convenience of living near their place of work and other places of interest.

"The G-I Group sure is it that Ridgewood Towers is each development by an automatic fire detection system, alarm and sprinkler.

Its location is highly strategic as well since the Ridgewood Towers allows unit owners to enjoy proximity to today's premier shopping and entertainment hubs located within the Global City

Entrepreneurial skills and luck bring success to Harvard grad

By Theresa L. Samaniego

SUCCESSFUL PROPERTY developers often tell stories of how their strong passion to build structures and their revolutionary visions to change the Philippine landscape, have fueled their victories in formerly competitive real estate arena.

After all, these two factors are admittedly highly crucial in driving the success of one's property investment challenges and doubtfully that could be met along the way.

But in the case of Guillermo D. Luchangco, Jr., forty into the thriving Philippine property sector was simply and entirely borne out of an "entrepreneurial opportunity" that he wanted to take advantage of.

Luchangco, who is the chair and CEO of investment house Investcorp and Legazpi Corp. of the Philippines (ICCP), admitted that he never ever dreamed of building houses.

As an MBA graduate from the Harvard University, Luchangco have successfully climbed the corporate ladder by working as a research and development packaging engineer at Procter and Gamble, and later on as the managing director and regional coordinator for management services in Asia for ICI among other corporate positions.

Investment banking

It was only in 1988 that he decided to put up ICCP which was basically an investment banking institution whose main services include financial advisory and mergers and acquisition work, equity underwriting and debt syndication. The company has since become one of the leaders among boutique investment houses in the country today, according to Luchangco.

The entrepreneur in Luchangco however had yearned him to put up a project drived, opinion aim for ICCP through which he would identify an area of opportunity that was not yet properly served and then form a consortium to develop a business in it.

And one of those areas he had identified was the property sector. Since then, ICCP has been aggressive in putting up various structures from industrial parks, buildings, down to residential communities.

Landmark project

In 1989, ICCP established the Science Park of the Philippines Inc., a subsidiary that has been tasked to put up world-class industrial parks. A year after, the Philippines, through the DTI, saw the opening of the World Trade Center in Pasay.

This was and still is, considered a landmark project that has linked the Philippines for the first time, through World Trade Center Association in New York City, to a global network that provides businessmen with services and facilities needed to make the conduct of international trade easier, faster and cheap.

But Luchangco wasn't the kind of man to rest on his laurels, with that by 1995, he had already put up ICCP's residential development arm, Pueblo de Oro Corp. "In 1993, I realized that there was a tremendous backlog in housing, and supply could not catch up with demand. So I decided to go into residential and mixed-use property development," he said in an interview.

Active developer

Today, Pueblo de Oro Development Corp. is an active developer with projects on various parts of the country its flagship project is the 360-hectare Pueblo de Oro Township in Cagayan de Oro, but it has since expanded on Cebu, Laguna, Pampanga and Batangas.

"In all these endeavors, I set a demanding target of quality, integrity and ethics, which became a hallmark of ICCP Group. I also tried to make each company distinctive in its field, with its own unique features that would enable it to stand out," Luchangco explained.

Luchangco believes that the huge success being enjoyed by the ICCP Group can be credited as well to "luck" and the company's drive to be "world class in everything we do."

Best practices

"We always try to match up with best practices, to do quality work and to hold ourselves up as a paragon of integrity and ethics," he said.

"We do not cry to cut corners, even in areas not obvious to the naked eye. For instance, in Cagayan de Oro, we installed elaborate drainage systems, a major drainage outfall down to the valley 80 meters below and a 27,000-cubic-meter detention pond to contain overflow water from heavy rains and typhoons. Our 500-ha. township was not affected by Tropical Storm 'Sendong', and we in fact ended up helping supply water to the city when its own water facility went down during the flood," he further explained.

And ICCP's imagery, along with Luchangco's has not gone unnoticed.

Luchangco has been chosen as one of 25 most ethical business leaders by Ethics Resource Executives of the Philippines in a book titled "Paragons."

"ICCP was the first investment house approved by DTI Agency for International Development to work on their privatization projects. Clients come to us knowing that we will always have their best interests in mind, and that we will render work of the highest quality," Luchangco further claimed.

Able workforce

The ICCP chair further credited the company's success to the able workforce.

"In our industrial parks, this takes the form of the best and most complete on-the-ground management teams. They take care of safety and protection, relationships with both the local governments and the local communities and the smooth operation of the projects," he said.

"We even have our own trained firefighting force on site. In the case of our residential developments, the Pueblo de Oro Township in Cagayan de Oro, for instance, not only has its own fire truck and firefighting crew, but it also has a township relations manager, whose task is to liaise with the residents and business locators of the project and to handle any complaints and problems," he noted.

While ICCP has so much on its plate right now, Luchangco admitted that he still finds time unwind, admitting to become Property-a-holic he and his wife love dancing. "Recently, I enjoy spending time with my family."

"My wife and I enjoy dancing once in a while, and we can sometimes be seen indulging this pleasure in ballroom or DJ dance or at parties," he concluded.

Luchangco sets a demanding target of quality, integrity and ethics, which became a hallmark of ICCP Group

'Blue Zone' . . . From page B2-1

main comfort. His structural designs on the model home units—detached and cluster units...have high ceilings and cross ventilation. Herbs that these garden, as well as provide antioxidants such as lubricate spinach, were already planted on the lots. Hotel guests can pick their herb leaves as the herb gardens beside the hotel doors.

The design of the units allege is conducive for walking and jogging, and the hilly terrain provides natural resistance training to improve the individual's cardiovascular efficiencies and tone up the muscles.

For active senior citizens

Priority candidates for this retirement village would be senior citizens (55) and up who have expressed a desire to live their current years to the fresh, open vicinities of the mountains, away from the bustling, Cavite—away from the congested, polluted and crime-ridden urban communities. Sanjana Premiere also caters empty lovelies and bachelorettes who feel they would experience difficulties in adjusting to life in their home provinces or cities, and would rather live in a community with like-minded neighbors in First World living facilities.

Kristy An, president of PCE said the project's proponents said that retirement living is not new.

"This is what they do in San Diego in Arizona and Florida, wherein active seniors live together. Why? They most complimentship and sound life. It has been proven with all the research studies, that if a person lives alone, his will to live (shortens). The purpose in life (fades). At age 50 to 60 you're still full of energy. By the time you're 65, you're out of energy, and unless the energy is rejuvenated, you just sweep early. In community living will prolong your life. And hopefully to a place like this, the community living will enhance the extended life. This is our concept," Ao explained to Overseas Property.

Ao added that the facilities, furthermore, will offer medical integrative medicine.

"What integrative medicine? Seniors don't want to take pills and among medicines anymore, but they go herbal and do exercises, the key to healthy life and companionship. Look at the Blue Zone stories: diet, family life, community living—just to name things we want to put together so the seniors will have a pleasant place to stay," Ao said.

Ahn, who has planted several kinds of herbs in the Sanjana garden herself, said the project aims to instill a tourism mood to attitude toward health among members of the community.

"When we [owners with permits] in Sanjana, we are going to incorporate certain learnings. That's why we have the ongoing construction of a spa, and we to undergo a paradigm shift in understand wellness and prevention."

Her mantra: There's no place for stress in the community because stress kills and makes one age prematurely.

A suburban escape in Metro Manila

Today's urbanites want such fast-paced lifestyles that leave little room for quality time with the family. At Field Residences, one of the premium residential projects by SM Development Corporation (SMDC), families can live out a nurturing suburban lifestyle with people who matter most. The mid-rise condominium village sits on 7.8 hectares of prime land in Sucat, Parañaque, with plenty of open spaces where families can grow, children can roam and run free, and ultimately bond with friends and loved ones.

The 13-tower project has the feel of a suburban southern sanctuary and the ease of big-city living. It brings the energizing effect of nature to condominium living with a line-up of swimming pools, where families can wash the stress of a busy workday away. The lush gardens and open playfield are the perfect spots to relax with a good book, while the private area and children's playground provide just the right setting for bonding memories.

Engage the family in sports activities at the basketball, volleyball or badminton courts, jogging path or bikelanes. An selection of chairs and, the function rooms and poolside make for the perfect venue for intimate gatherings with loved ones.

Just behind the City Sunset, Field Residences also ensures the convenience of having everything one needs within reach, from supermarkets and retail outlets, to leisure spots such as dining establishments and entertainment centers.

Spend life's simple pleasures at your own top-quality Field Residences home. Contact an SMDC Property Consultant today at (+63 2) 858-0300, or log on to www.smresidences.com today to find out how.

PROPERTY

Editor Cesar D. Hargasang

BLUE Zone near NUVALI Siniguis is a 14-hectare spread of hilly land in Silang, Cavite just 28 minutes down from Tagaytay City, off the Sta. Rosa-Tagaytay Road

'Blue Zone' for aspiring centenarians

Text and photos by Tessa B. Salazar

YOUVE HEARD of Green Zones, places where human developments have been executed in harmony with the surrounding ecosystem. Now we have a "Blue Zone," a place where human developments are not only in harmony with nature, but in synchronicity with the wellness of its inhabitants, as well.

In Silver Corners, it would be typical for humans to live to their 80s, 90s and even to their centenarian healthier and happier. Loma Linda in California, Okinawa in Japan, and the Italian island of Sardinia are just some examples of Blue Zones.

Here in the Philippines, a group plans to replicate the Blue Zone. And it has found what it considers the ideal place—a 14-hectare spread of hilly land in Silang, Cavite—just 28 minutes down Daang Tagaytay City, off the Sta. Rosa-Tagaytay Road. The site, the group observed, enjoys temperatures two degrees lower than the average in the lowlands.

ALLEEN de Guzman-Victorino on, and shows examples of superfoods for "super health".

The project, called Sanjana Premiere, was introduced in the media Jan. 9 at the site's clubhouse. And unlike the usual mix of launches where real estate developers promote construction highlights of the development, a team of medical doctors, wellness experts and plant-based nutritionists greeted members of the press as well as prospective property owners.

In Lot Sanjana Premiere, Medical Director Alex and PCIC Trans and Realty Corp president Ale

For retirement-age citizens

The team explained the crux of Sanjana Premiere: a place for retirement-age citizens to live in an environment and a lifestyle imbued with holistic wellness practices with round-the-clock professional guidance.

According to the team, Sanjana Premiere would be the first in the country with complete health facilities, natural therapies and services with 22 hotel rooms, spa facilities and gym. It would have low-lying buildings for an unobstructed view of nature. Herbal gardens and trees would blend with the community, which will engage in various exercise and recreational activities. The community would provide support and nurture the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of members and encourage independence in personal choices for daily living.

The team of health experts—whose objective would be to maintain a stress-free, active-living environment—ultimately aims for the community members to all reach their 100th birthday.

But to achieve this, the team said, it would require 24/7 maintenance of healthy lifestyles and happy dispositions.

The team stressed that prospective residents need to be screened first by the group before they would be allowed to be part of this community. Individuals who are not willing to cooperate with the team need not bother to come, medical director Virginia Jean Abu said.

Location

Sanjana Premiere is located just across international schools and institutions Adventist University of the Philippines (which will also soon have its own international hospital). Sanjana is 10 km south of Makati, 30 minutes from Asian Hospital in Alabang, Muntinlupa City, Tagaytay Highlands, and the springs of Los Baños, Laguna.

It's an hour's drive from the Ninoy Aquino International airport, and five minutes away from Nuvali in Sta. Rosa.

Medi-spa hotel, residences

The Sanjana Premiere Spa Residences of DCS Trade and Realty Corp. and Sanjana Realty Corp., is a first-class medi-spa hotel and residential area. The project espouses active senior living, and is comprised of a five-star medi-spa and hotel facilities, physical rehabilitation facilities and active seniors' village and cooperative housing. The village offers entertainment amenities, including a fitness center with state-of-the-art equipment and swimming pool. Residents and guests can watch a movie, take a dance class, enjoy a lecture or take a trip or visit local attractions with neighbors.

The village clubhouse, the centerpiece of Sanjana Spa Residences, offers numerous activities and programs all year long. It provides excellent venues for community-resident as well as private parties. The stylish interior décor accentuates the large space.

The housing structures in earth-tones that deflect heat is planned to consume minimal electricity and generate maximum

BLUE ZONE

THE STRUCTURAL

More young professionals based in Makati dream of calling the CBD their residential address—but only few have the budget to actually make the big move. Now, mid-income developer Empire East Land Holdings Inc. offers those on the way up a chance at power living without the hefty price tag. San Lorenzo Place.

Located along EDSA's corner Chino Roces Avenue, the four-tower San Lorenzo Place enjoys a strategic location three blocks away from Ayala Avenue. One of Makati's main thoroughfares, Ayala crosses the heart of the CBD, and showcases the country's most prolific businesses.

"San Lorenzo Place is an address that lets you move up in life," said Empire East Land Holdings Inc. President Anthony Charlemagne Yu. "It also gives you power over your own time because of its premier location."

San Lorenzo Place:

CBD Living Made Accessible

The two-bedroom model unit available for viewing at the project site

Those based in San Lorenzo Place easily beat the rush hour on their way to work. Homeowners with cars have an instant link to Makati via an efficient road network. In the same vein, they enjoy balance in their day-to-day routine. Living close to work means residents enjoy an extra hour of either restful sleep at home or afternoon fun at Greenbelt.

San Lorenzo Place features condos with one to three bedrooms and picture windows showcasing views of the Makati skyline. Play amenities at its exclusive podium deck include a swimming pool complex, outdoor spa, clubhouse, children's playground, terrace courts and landscaped patio.

In case residents really need to leave the spa, they can take the train instead and free themselves from the stress of getting stuck in gridlock. The project is set right next to the MRT-3 Magallanes station. The MRT-3 line connects to both the LRT-1 and LRT-2, making every part of the metro quickly accessible.

For as low as P13,000 a month for a one-bedroom unit, owning a condo in Makati without breaking the bank is now possible. "Getting a piece of Makati your own has never been this affordable," said Yu.

Move up to the choicest Makati CBD address. Visit the San Lorenzo Place showroom at the project site located at the junction of EDSA and Chino Roces Avenue. Or call 818-3333 or visit http://sanlorenzoplace.com for more information.

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LOST IN TRANSIT

Paolo R. Reyes

Windows to the future

CES 2012—the world's largest gadget convention in Las Vegas—is like a strip club of the latest electronics. Who stole the show?

THE PAINTING Director Microsoft Research is project that explores wearable technology in the future

LAS VEGAS—"Hit the face of Bill Gates," mentioned a suspiciously named Ryan Seacrest to the bald man seated beside him.

The bald man was the Silicon Valley billionaire Steve Ballmer, better known as the chief executive officer of Microsoft.

Clasped in Ballmer's left hand was a touchscreen phone, where a profile photo of Gates was found within one of the graphic "live tiles" of the gadget's home screen.

"It says I missed a call from Bill" Ballmer told the "American Idol" host as his right finger waved on the bespectacled face of his golf buddy and former boss. "What time did he call? 6:07 p.m."

In a darkened ballroom of The Venetian hotel, Ballmer—with the help of Seacrest—was demonstrating Microsoft's latest innovation, the Windows 8 smartphone, to a crowd of thousands.

This was, he announced earlier, his last keynote speech at the annual Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, where some 3,000 companies showcase more than 20,000 products to an estimated 150,000 visitors from around the world.

For techies that make the yearly pilgrimage to the Nevada desert city that never sleeps, CES—the birthplace of the VCR (1970), CD (1981), Nintendo (1985), and Stick (1998)—is like a strip club of the latest electronics.

Microsoft, a top exhibitor since Bill Gates first took the stage in 1995 to unveil his company's public face, will not be returning to CES in January 2013.

But its swan song at the world's largest gadget show and technology trade fair did reaffirm its place at the top of the electronics food chain.

The software giant's impressive line of products—Windows Phone, Metro, Windows 8, Xbox 360, Kinect, Skype and Sync—may have done all the talking at the 2012 CES. Ballmer, however, is the ultimate silver-tongued salesman, and one famous for his powers of persuasion.

In three exclusive excerpts from his 90-minute keynote with tech geeks of all shapes and swipes, Ballmer gives the world good reason to believe that the future is not a million light years away—it's already happening right this minute.

On the Windows Phone

"Phone from days are [of about] a set of icons, a set of applications. That's your view of the world. But the Windows Phone puts people first—those who are important to you. Six users, your, email, and text. But what's really essential is

Is Australia taking over Singapore?

IT'S THE second year of St. Jerome's Laneway Festival in Singapore, and making my way through a full crowd of fawning wedge lolling in the heat and boundary during the 'fuck no' had me thinking (than many of us had resorted to Sort Cunning Path for a movement a bit longer than just a heavy-overcast 'no.

IMO Singapore's proximity to Manila...and with the reality of us never catching the Australian wedding bouquet...St. Jerome's Singapore leg is a welcome addition to this region. Beyond Rushes, beyond crocodiles, it established base for the ever-growing Australian diaspora in fishing line—supporting the services of its culture, or rather, its consumer handle over global culture.

If the common perception of the vast "Westpac" outback is unimpressive enough with the Sydney Opera House—solid dismissive jeering of Australian enthusiasm making up the southern hemisphere's answer to Studio? Melbourne is deservedly cultural capital—and in addition, equivalent to an entire country's 'cultural capital'? On this endless cyclothymia cultured for the purposes of this review, like Melbourne and Melbourne's postcode nationality) has stretched out into the sea of its sibling states where it spills into localized vibe like Melbourne's offering Durban Style to the Philippine market (see Gumbuya and Bonifacio), etc). There is an impulse to consider Australia's commercial cultivate for a reason—and when hosted together in an issue, a style emerges.

St. Jerome's used to just be a little Melbourne but inside a small laneway off a high traffic junction landmarked by McDonald's, a half hidden-the bowed by

the people who know it. It wasn't the popular idea of the 'outback'—let alone the dining number of those "under your nose" locations have acquired ah public cafeteria to scout and hoop up with them. St. Jerome's course, Jerome Sonnets, started the festival when he promised the headcounters that he would close down the line for a party. It wasn't a crazy idea...after all, musicians are inclined here and cities where young aesthetes stop to sit out their thrift shirts over draught beer was an indie vice grip that lent favourite poets Genevieve sets pants and public works will tell you that in Melbourne...or in Sydney. While the Australians are unlikely to ever cut off our the Supply pies, the Philippine karaoke standard also had from Melbourne), this knob in the machine marked the promising beginning for a highly marketable festival in Australia. So, while the festival is no longer in a marvelous influenced. Of course, Singapore still sees the fruit of many an American handshake—with Marie Antoinette's multimillion Marina Bay Sands pavement "theme" constantly flooded out, and being the home of the consolidated MTV Asia when MTV Indonesia and MTV Philippines dissolved. While it's hard to fully see the effects of a country like Australia, whose cultural exports are almost completely limited to the draconian monopoly of three (two!) Australian pop artists, it's definitely there.

Singapore, being an exceptive neighbor of former international audiences, expats, unaccustomed Western sensibilities, and an oasis of Asia Pacific business and tourism, is an ideal elsewhere for entrepreneurial Australians. It appears, also, that as colonial envoys, both are relatively new nations that have each been much on a heritage backseat (I say this popular yet problematic notion reluctantly as aboriginal history is central to Australian identity).

Take for example, Singapore's Sentosa Hill, a former British head, still filled with expat-targeted monuments. We would have found Edward Hemingway there if he were alive—none that is where you'll find the Australian-owned Tipplers Club, a cozy, expat affair in Orchard Mallows that of Melbourne's Dr. Funny Pauline) to be a leading minister-girl and Ryan Gill, who for years worked as head chef in Shannon Bennett's Vue de Monde. As their invocative cuisine is named only as it could be eaten). The cuisine is right at established menu is vast about crocodile burgers and kangaroo pate, but a means to emphasize on "Australian meat" based on modern global trends, like a dainty mixtape expendable for its impressive taste anyclassic. It's probably not the kind of thing you for the Laneway market, but I haven't seen games started on how much of Australia is modern in the Singaporean supermarket.

But what really draws through the main artery of the Australia's "working vital" is, strangely enough, coffee. While its climate and flat expanse is impossible for coffee beans, its consumption culture makes the height corn worth it. Cities around the world are beginning to recognize this, and this is why many third-wave cafes in its mother London are marked by Australian ranging.

The wave of Italian immigrants that brought espresso machines to the fifties fostered the coffee mentality that caused Starbucks to enter only to quickly shrink the number of its stores down to other. Starbucks never hit the holy-you-can with their overpriced sookie cooking, and professional baristas just scoffed at them. It used to be that to be one of Melbourne's best cafes, and it was like eating actual with mannequins every morning. It was excessive, it was Melbourne, it was "just coffee." When I left for Manila, my mornings took a excellent hour—an hour I never knew existed, leaving myself like those were passing by gold. Before my withdrawal impaired me, I was surprised to discover Singapore's specialty coffee cul cull—those include Papa Palheta, The Plant, and Percy Pigeon. These cafes have an almighty Melbourne soul—from their minimalist to what is generally called generally "looks like." If you will any of these cafes that you send a "long black" or a "flat white" they won't even think. That is not your average cup of Chapi-O.

But while we now get the spoils of Laneway and long (backs for indefinitely, through Singapore), removed from its natural context, they are mere products whose background is in mere a hologram. When Laneway was restored from a lane, it became a festival still called Laneway. When Laneway was brought to Singapore, it became a travelling circus of musicians curated by Australian expatriates, "only Queens Sentosa and" myself didn't really even joins to build it into a multinational event," Laneway co-founder and promoter Noel Pepper told CNN. "Singapore's an amazing country, it's fun gateway. It's easy for artists to get to. It's a Western country in the middle of Asia, so it's unique."

Whether or not this frontier land-culture to emerge without assuming themselves under this new taste standard only to be beaten by the money to award into those fine model purposes. It's wait and see. The night is young for Singapore, and the still bathed moonlight is close enough for us to experience...though perhaps only as a product, but because Australia "just did their thing" and normally found itself able to pull up chairs for a global audience. It's not a bad way to be, and it's one that I'm glad got anchored in by its cultural landscaping. Or it could very well be just the coffee talking.

COFFEE from Jonas the Grocer

SUPER OBSESSION

PLAIN Glazed; Premium Pon De Rings; Pon De Rolls

Donut dreams

By Pam Pastor

FOR YEARS, we've obsessed over pon de ring donuts, those soft, chewy, lovely little mochi donuts that look like overstuffed bread brioches. We've carried boxes and boxes of them home from Japan. One time, while waiting for my flight back to Manila, I found them at an airport in a random city and I literally emptied my pockets and spent the last of my dollars on yet another box of those donuts. I can't remember the city. I can remember the donuts. They were good.

During particularly long donut droughts, we excised to our armchair and sighed. "Why don't we have pon de ring donuts in Manila?" One time, we became so desperate that we actually started Googling for recipes. Seriously.

But decent donuts do come true, thanks to wife-and-husband team Michelle and Andrew Que. The couple got hooked on pon de ring donuts on their annual visits to Taiwan and decided to make them available here in the Philippines. "We used to bring them home by the suitcase load and were not as good as they were in Taiwan."

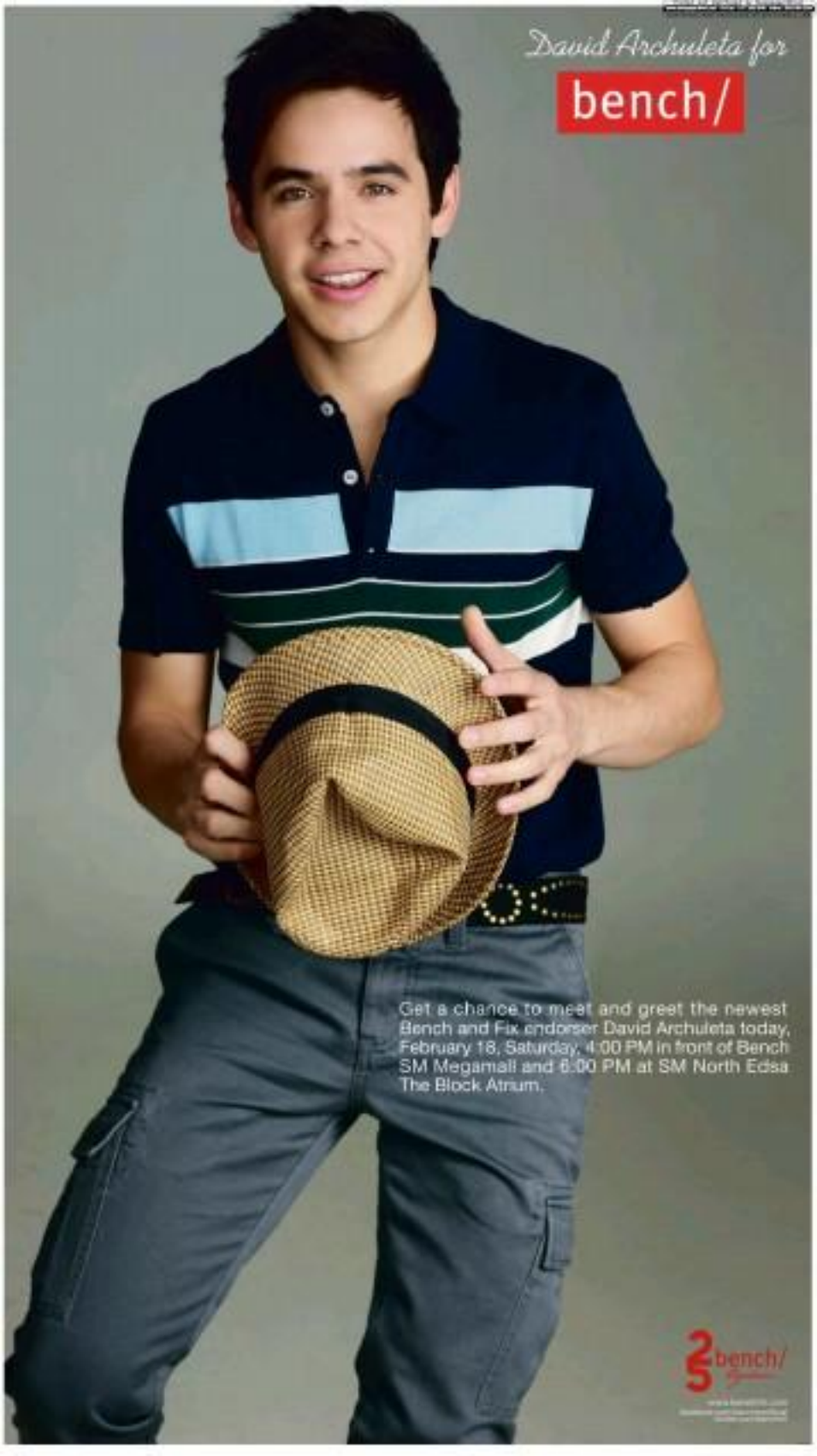
They started making their own pon de rings and selling them at Serendra Carrade in December. "We wanted to see if there was a market for these chewy donuts over the Philippines," said Andrew. They started their brand Gardner's Donuts after their son who was named after Andrew's father Gary and grandfather Vicente.

Huge hit

The donuts were a huge hit, disappearing quickly from their booth at the weekend market. "When people tried the donuts, they were surprised and delighted at the texture. Almost all of them bought boxes for their families and friends to try and they kept coming back," said Andrew.

It's no big surprise that Gardner's Donuts's Dozens offers a different donut experience. "You will immediately notice the difference once you take a bite. It's chewy and not as sweet as other donuts."

After the holidays, Michelle and Andrew decided to open their flagship store. They serve a number of different flavors—five in each of seasonal and rotating taste tests—from with the help of their families. They offer *pon de rings* (Plain Glazed, Choco Glazed, Brown Sugar Glazed, Choco Crunch, Choco Sprinkle, Strawberry Sprinkle, Vanilla Sprinkle, Cookies and Cream, Nutty Choco); premium *pon de rings* (Mikado, Choco Overload, Choco Mallows, Choco Nuts, Choco Cookies, Choco Rocher, Choco Marshmallow, Choco Graham, Choco Oreo, Choco Nutella, Choco Strawberry, Choco Mango, Choco Ube, Choco Matcha, Choco Caramel, Choco Peanut Butter, Choco Cheesecake, Choco Bacon, Choco Pandan, Choco Mocha, Choco Coffee, Choco Vanilla, Choco Cookies and Cream, Choco Rocher, Choco Nutella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Geeking out

From interactive whiteboards to innovative smartphones, here are coolest Microsoft Windows-based gadgets that were unveiled at the 2012 CES in Las Vegas

Nokia Lumia 900
Available in cyan and matte black, this user-friendly Nokia model features a 4.3- inch AMOLED ClearBlack display that provides a super touch-screen experience on a device that will fits easily in your hand.

HTC Titan II
The latest smartphone from HTC runs Android 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich and has a 16-megapixel digital camera, and access to ultra-fast 4G LTE speeds.

Lenovo A710
The world's slimmest and most flexible 27-inch, all-in-one media device. It combines a frameless display (supporting 10-point multi-touch for greater accuracy) with a widely adjustable screen angle (from -4 to 60 degrees).

Samsung Series 9
A half-inch thin and weighing less than 2.2 pounds, this processor-ultraportable showcases a brushed aluminum lid, a backlit keyboard with an aluminum-body design and edge-to-edge widescreen display.

Sharp AQUOS Board
This whopping 80-inch LED-LCD touch-active display can easily replace a traditional white-board or projection system. A versatile tool for business meetings, videoconferences, presentations, and classrooms.

Sony VAIO Z Series
The all-new Z Series, with Windows 7, introduces the next evolution in ultra-portable laptops: second-generation Intel Core processors (up to 3.7GHz) and a fully powered look with AMD graphics.

THE NEW Metro style interface on a Windows 8 touch-screen device.

Windows . . .

From page C1

what's going on with your brother, sister, co-worker, your Twitter feed. (With the Windows Phone) there get rounded, dulled, and in video, at a glance, I can really see what's going on with them. We have apps. We have a great browser. (That's why) the New York Times rolled the it [computer, classy, satisfying, fast and cohesive]."

On the Metro interface

"The new Metro style user interface is a celebration all of the relationships in your life. We have one place where they all can come together — the People Hub, which the brings together all of your favorite social networks. These Live Tiles are constantly lit up, are just when they link to that application, but the content that's actually behind it, too, make it really easy to nurture the relationships you have in real life on your phone."

On Xbox

"Xbox represents the best part of our DNA. We make these big, bold bets. We invest for the long-term. And we make exciting things happen. And 10 years later, we're the world's sales leader for consoles, which is exciting as heck. Today we have over 66 million Xbox users."

On Kinect

"The ability of a computer to see you, recognize you and hear you really sparked the imagination. Kinect reveals dramatic entertainment, and we'll see it revolutionize other industries, from education to health care. I'm thrilled to announce that Kinect is coming to Windows in February. We're already working with more than 200 companies — Sysco, Telefonica, Marel, American Express, real stores — on interesting Kinect applications. The breadth of what they're doing is mind-blowing!"

On Skype and Syve

"Syve [Microsoft's voice-controlled, in-vehicle communications system] is near-zero setup intelligent experiences in over 4 million Ford vehicles. And I think we'll reach 9 million additional cars in the next three years. We also acquired Skype last year. It's amazing and we're focused on making it even better for the 200 million people who use 200 billion minutes of Skype voice and video minutes[ly]."

On what's next

"We have a chance in the year ahead to really take our game to the next level — across phones, PCs, tablets, TV, the Xbox. The heart and soul of that will be our new Metro user interface. We pioneered it over the last few years — it's fast, fluid, and dynamic, and really helping people to connect closely to the people, information, music, and friends that are most important to them. So, what's next (is 2012's Metro, Metro, Metro. It will drive the new magic across all of our experiences."

SUPER SURVEY

How was Whitney a part of your life?

By Nito Mark M. Sablan
Contributor

THERE is no denying how much the late, great Whitney Houston has influenced and influenced a lot of people. The following are just some of the countless fans who are sure in awe and will always love Whitney.

"I remember singing her songs as a kid, with the belief that I actually could sound like her." – Louie Barrozo

"The first time I saw 'All' was the first pop song I ever memorized: 'Saving All My Love For You' is my favorite karaoke song. And 'Try it on My Own' is my college heartbreak! 'All me up after a breakup' anthem!" – Jaja Castro, TOP Magazine

"She changed my life in many ways. She was my inspiration. I grew up listening to her music and I became a lot of singers in the world consider her as their hero. I still remember when I was just three years old, I performed 'I Will Always Love You' in the first amateur singing contest that I joined and won. – Myrna, singer

"My very favorite Whitney Houston song is I grew up listening to her greatest hits. I would always put her CD on, turn up the player, and just lose myself in the music and sing along. Since our family loves singing, trying to perform versions of her songs was always the highlight of my karaoke session. And when I was in high school and in college, I would always choose one of her songs as my audition piece for glee clubs."– Grace Libato, blog magazine managing editor

"I sang a lot of Whitney songs when I was a teenager and I think she's responsible for messing up my pitch. Until now, I can't really sing gay songs, pitch wise. I find it hard to sing Dolly Parton as I was raised singing only songs from Whitney." – Monkey

"My dad was a fan of Whitney Houston when I was a kid and he used to play about the soundtrack of "The Bodyguard." (He) over and over again. In the car. My favorite song is 'I'm Every Woman.'"– Ashton Perkins, singer

"Whitney Houston was a favorite of my older relatives whom I grew up with. By being around them, often, I grew up hearing her songs a lot. The Whitney Houston songs they used to play often were On the Love Me So Emotional" and "I Wanna Dance with Somebody." I can say that some of my most significant memories with my relatives in Sta. Rosa (which is probably a result of growing up hearing that kind of music." – Lance Raymundo, singer

"My parents bought my sisters and me a karaoke player for Christmas when I was eight. The first song I ever learned to sing was "I Have Nothing." My sisters and I used to perform it at family parties. Because of this Whitney was a huge influence in my childhood and pretty much shaped my taste in music."– Ego Mayuga, makeup artist

Whitney's songs were (and still are) relevant during several stages of my life. "One Moment in Time" kept me going even when things were not the way I wanted them to be in my writing career. I have sung "I Will Always Love You" by myself, of course, for someone that I used to love and continue to love. I can still relate to her songs from "The Bodyguard" soundtrack, especially "Run to You." – Sonnydy Quiz, screenwriter and director

"I started learning her songs for voice classes in the summers of grade school. Most of the time I ended up performing the unbelievably high notes." – Sara Bilbao-Jr, director of media arts

I studied voice because I wanted to sing "The Greatest Love of All." The first dance I learned in "Save Pole I Know" via the MTV steps. – Oma Hines, copywriter

She made me want to sing. – Aimee Blanco

Whitney was a big part of my teenage life when I was still in Abu Dhabi. The first movie I saw alone in a theater was "The Bodyguard" when I was 11. I actually even watched it twice. The first movie my sister and I watched together in a theater was "Waiting to Exhale" when I was 12. My stepdad would always scold me whenever I sang Whitney Houston songs early in the morning. I even sang Whitney Houston songs in school when I was in programs. I will definitely miss her. – Khatrice Gatero

The first ever song I sang in karaoke was "The Greatest Love of All." One of the first cassette tapes I had was Whitney Houston's. Her last gig sounds sooner or before many fans have. – Aubrey Miles, actress

E-mail the author at ntsmarkbl@inquirer.com, or visit his blog at ntsmarkbl.blogspot.com.

LIFESTYLE Travel

Memoirs of a (Pinoy) geisha

I wanted to know what it's like to be in a geisha's shoes for a day. And now here I was, wearing four-inch platform slippers—and loving every minute of it

By Angela V Ignacio
Contributor

TOTTERING precariously in my four-inch shoke (wooden platform slippers), I strolled along the streets of Kyoto's Gion district one drizzly afternoon, leaving a trail of admiring glances from foreigners and locals alike.

I smiled shyly, blushing under both the thick white makeup—and pretended I wouldn't trip and fall flat on my perfectly painted face.

As far as appearances went, I was a maiko, an apprentice geisha about to make her debut in Japanese society. But in fact, I was a debunked Filipina model in a rented wig and Kimono who was having the most surreal time hours of her life.

Blame it on years of obsessing with Japanese culture, but I've long wondered what it was like to be a resident of the "real-live world." While planning for my Japan trip last November, I came across pictures of bright ornate dressed up [illegible] geishas, including one of a barely recognizable Jessica Simpson in full maiko regalia.

Thoroughly intrigued, I googled maiko in Kyoto of living geisha makeover services. Enacted, the fees were pretty steep, ranging from ¥5,000 to ¥7,000 (around P2,500–P3,500) for a few moments in costume, but it wasn't a small price to pay for a geisha fantasy about to come true.

Upon reaching Kyoto, I booked a slot in the charming Yumekoubou studio in Gion, the [illegible] capital's famous geisha district. After entering her with sample photos, I was able to convince my friend and fellow Zili's alumna Melissa Hiller, who awoke for a late dress in Osaka, to do the "maiko-ver" with me.

A bit of history: A maiko is a teenage geisha in training, distinguishable by her colorful kimono with a red collar and [illegible] hairdo. In contrast, a geisha is a

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SEIN BY DANIEL SHELTON

HUTTS BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

SHERMAN'S LAGOON BY JIM TOOMEY

DARTH BY STEVE KELLEY AND JEFF PARKER

TUNDRA BY CHAD CARPENTER

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) This is a fabulous day for research and investigation. Whether you're looking for a bargain or an answer to a question, you'll find it. Be sure to keep your receipts.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Your assertiveness will reveal another way to advance your career. Sometimes you have to be willing to step out of your comfort zone. Others will respect your courage.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Your communication skills are sharp today. Use them to your advantage. Others will be receptive to your suggestions, because you will express them.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) This is a wonderful day to make purchases. Consider your options carefully, however, and ask questions. Others will be impressed with your knowledge.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Your concentration could lead to important developments. Avoid projects that require collaboration with others. You'll be very quick to resolve any misunderstandings.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Your communication skills are perfect for a career in sales. Others will be comfortable with you, and you'll have no problem getting your point across.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) You can be very productive on your own today. Therefore, you can clear up what may seem like a difficult task by choosing your moods, especially your interactions with others.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Others will be very receptive to your ideas today. Don't be afraid to express your opinions. Your confidence will be contagious.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Your assertiveness will help you get what you want today. You're willing to work very hard to reach your earnings goals. Others will appreciate your efforts.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) You're motivated to make changes in your life today. Others may be reluctant to go along with your ideas, but you'll be able to convince them. Your powers of persuasion are strong.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) You're in the mood to socialize today. You'll enjoy meeting new people and getting to know them. Others will be impressed with your knowledge.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) You're motivated to make changes in your life today. You're willing to work very hard to reach your earnings goals. Others will appreciate your efforts.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more puzzles and programs, see www.sudoku.com.

Answer to previous puzzle

4	7	1	2	3	5	6	8	9
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6	4	8	5	2	7	1	9	3
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7	3	5	6	9	8	3	4	7

Conceptis SudoKu By Dave Green

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Difficulty Level ★★★★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Clerk
5 Gem
10 Lack of noise
14 "What the world of ___"
15 Impressionist
16 Agent's income
17 Cleo
18 Cleo's son
19 Investment newspaper
20 Cleo's contemporaries
21 Advertisement
23 Tuck
24 Tuck
25 Cleo's
27 Lawful document
28 Cleo's former love
31 Cleopatra
32 Advertisement
33 Wizard's wand
34 "O, Romeo, Romeo, that"
35 Shelter in trees
36 Stormy weather
37 Stormy
38 Atomic blast
39 Actress Sorvino
40 Actress Hunter
41 Cleo's daughter
42 Cleo's daughter
43 Cleo's daughter
44 Pest control problem
45 Peanut butter choice
46 ___ for, seeks to obtain
47 Cleo's wife
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DOWN

1 Shakespearean
2 Thought
3 Bible
4 Cleopatra's asp
5 Cleopatra's partner
6 Blinds or covers from sight
7 Cleopatra's nickname
8 Flows
9 Rug
10 Photographer's family
11 Educated
12 Eight, roman
13 Traditional wisdom
14 Cleopatra's husband
15 Cleopatra's husband
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Hope blossoms as the autumn leaves fall

Months after the earthquake, the awe-inspiring scenery in Japan brings comfort to the hearts of locals and tourists alike, and renews one's appreciation of life

Text and photos by Angela F. Ignacio
Lost Boxer

IT'S SAID that the kanyou phenomenon, or the turning of the autumn leaves in Japan, inspires people to write beautiful poems and prose. It can even make amateur photographers produce photos like pros.

I didn't believe this at first, as I'd grown up thinking that nothing could ever be as breathtakingly beautiful as the delicate sakura (cherry blossoms) of spring.

After months of preparation (and years of anticipation), I'd finally been able to book a trip to Osaka last March. Hopefully to catch a glimpse of the budding pink blooms for the first time. But then the tsunami-earthquake disaster happened just days before my departure.

Although Osaka was largely unscathed, no-one was sure, and it didn't feel right to go on my dream trip while everyone around me was living in a nightmare. So, I decided not to go.

For a budget traveller like me, this breakup definitely didn't come cheap. All that money and effort I'd spent in procuring a tourist visa and other requirements went down the drain.

To add insult to injury, I was told my plane ticket didn't qualify for a refund. Of course, my losses paled in comparison to those of the people of Japan, but because I'd dreamed of this opportunity for so long, I couldn't help but feel crushed.

By late world time, there came another golden opportunity for me to go to Japan before the year ended. Melissa Tehan, my friend and would-be host in Osaka, reassured me that autumn was the best time to come visit, having found from experience that the fall scenery was more enticing than the spring blooms. I still had my doubts, and I'd already recovered from the financial blow from my botched first attempt. But life rarely hands out second chances, so I took it.

Boy, was I ever glad I did.

Sunset fatigue

Because my family left little room for commuting in Tokyo, I decided to stay in the Kansai province and make the most of the area.

When I'd arrived in Osaka in late November, the leaves were just about in their prime. But in a matter of days, the foliage literally exploded into a maelstrom of colours, pale gold and fiery orange and blood-red. Melissa wasn't kidding when she said I wouldn't be disappointed, because the moment I glimpsed kouyou for the first time, it just took my breath away.

I threw away the carefully planned itinerary and just insisted to go wherever my kouyou-induced wanderlust took me. It brought me to the magnificent landscapes of old world Kyoto, to the hidden beauty of sacred Mount Koya in Wakayama, to the bustling, bright-lit city of Kobe, and to the attractive parks of downtown Osaka.

And the food?

Sensuous dango delicacies and sweets peppered nearby stalls—roasted sweet potatoes, marron (chestnut) flavoured cream puffs, ohagi or mochi rice balls covered in red bean paste, matcha tempura (maple leaves dipped in batter and fried to a crisp perfection) ... Mm, heaven.

Among the cities I'd visited, Kyoto had the most number of beautiful leaf-viewing places. I strolled in the tranquil gardens of Maruyama Park in the heart of Gion district, walked through the dense, swirling haze of momiji (maple leaves) at Tofukuji Temple, and marvelled at the spectacular nightime view in Ryoanji-no-niwa.

Temples and shrines were filled to bursting with tourists snapping photos left and right in an effort to capture the fleeting beauty of their surroundings. It was the first autumn view I'd ever seen in my life, first for Japanese, it was their first after the great disaster.

What they said was right; not only does kouyou inspire the mind, but it also heals the heart and soothes the spirit. Judging from the delighted faces all around me, mine included, it seemed that it did just that.

Extra special

By the time my 14-day vacation had ended, so had the peak of kouyou. Soon it would be winter, and the once-brilliant foliage would turn brown and be scattered to ruin. Then it would be solemn season all over again. The thought still sent a twinge of sadness through me, but looking back, I'm positively happy with how things had turned out for me.

I might not have been able to see the cherry blossoms, but I had been given the chance to witness something equally wonderful, if not more, in exchange.

I know that it also happens in other countries around the world and is probably just as beautiful. But to me, this experience is and will always be extra special. To me, autumn in Japan possesses a memorable kind of beauty that, in the midst of last year's tragedy, stirred up a whole gamut of feelings—of wonder and appreciation for what's in front of you, of gratitude for being alive to see it, and of hope for many more moments like this in the future.

CLOCKWISE, from left: The kanyou viewing is at its peak in the Maruyama Park, Kyoto's oldest and most popular public park; a statue in Sojobo Temple, Shimane Gion; Hidden valley, Tofukuji Temple's Tsuten-kyo Bridge offers a spectacular view of autumn foliage; Zen garden, Tsumaki, enjoying the park's scenic, patterned maple leaves at Tofukuji, Kyoto park

Memoirs of a (Pinoy) geisha

From page D1

full-fledged geisha whose costume and elegance is marked by her kimono's more ornate motif and white collar.

Dramatic backdrop

Most tourists choose to dress up as *maiko* regardless of their age, because the latter's appearance is usually much more striking (plus, the package is cheaper compared to a geisha's). The locals also took pains to ensure that included a short outdoor stroll, as the autumn foliage made for a dramatic backdrop.

Choosing a kimono from the studio's collection proved to be quite time-consuming for us, since there were so many beautiful designs available. Once done, we changed into thin white inner robes and headed to the makeup station, where the artists applied white rice powder to our face and neck areas.

AFTER receiving all our jewelry and pre-applied makeup, the studio artist covers our heads with hair nets before applying white rice powder foundation all over our face and neck areas; *A maiko's eyebrows are usually drawn shorter compared to those of a geisha, since longer eyebrows signify maturity; Mechanical layering: first, the white undergarments with red patterns, then the kimono proper. Getting dressed requires skill and assistance, especially with tying the obi(?).*

Because the nape is considered as erogenous zone by the Japanese, a maiko's collar hangs low at the back with a W-shaped patterns of bare skin to accentuate the area.

Next, our eyelids were lined with a hint of red, brows darkened, and lips purged. Once the makeup had dried, the artists dressed us in a red-patterned under-kimono before posting us the kimono proper. Mine was a beautiful aqua-and-gold creation with embroidered flowers and red lining, firmly held in place by a fiery crimson sash or datori obi that cascaded down my back.

Finally, they placed a wafer's-thin fly-ornamented avaricious hairstyle over my net-covered head. I was actually supposed to know that we'd be wearing wigs, because there simply wasn't enough of my coarse, fine hair over for a ponytail. Except for a thin, remembered strip of material along the hairline, one could hardly tell where my hairband ended and the fake hair began.

It wondered how geishas ever put up with having their natural hair regularly waxed and stretched and pulled every which way just so they could sport those impossible hairstyles every day. I've read that most of them developed balding crowns from all that pulling. No pain, no gain.

"Okay, all done," the makeup artist said in Nipponga after a moment, so I thanked her and stood up to look at myself in the full-length mirror for the first time.

My eyes popped open in disbelief. Is that me? Gone are here, I was transformed from an ordinary tourist into a living, breathing Japanese work of art, and she completely took my breath away. The goofy grin on her face was the only indication that it was really my own reflection I was staring at.

Shit and I took turns posing for our studio shots, then we were escorted outside for our 10-minute stroll.

After torturing us on our shoes for a few seconds on the cobblestone alley, we realized why Japanese ladies took such dainty steps back to the day. But despite our self-consciously wobbling, we were attracting so many curious stares and requests for photo ops that we felt 10 ft tall.

Well, almost.

"Do they think we're the real thing?" I whispered to Mel while graciously posing with passersby. (As it turns out, real geisha usually unwind at night and weren't as eager to do photo ops, so there go my delusions.)

The light drizzle soon turned into the drapery, which forced us to cut our walk short for fear of ruining our lovely kimono.

SEEING RED: Crimson accents outline the eyelids on one of the first of *charcoal*, red being a characteristic mark for maiko.

Life-changing experience

The whole experience lasted about three hours, from the moment we stood our ground to dress to the painstaking makeup removal, but we loved every minute of it.

We went back to Osaka that day armed with gorgeous photos, wonderful memories, and some pretty interesting observations, one being that many of the customers and photographers embodied were actually locals.

I found it refreshing that these makeover studios were not just to attract foreigners, but also entice locals to join in on the fun. I guess much of the mystery surrounding geisha still remains, even among their own countrymen.

In between those endless mundane moments of reality, I'm so happy I got to live my dream for a few precious hours. But through the geisha lens, I've also developed a newfound sense of respect and admiration for those women of the "willow world."

Far from being mere courtesans or, heaven forbid, prostitutes, geisha are literally "performing artists," universally unparalleled in beauty, poise, grace, and talent. We for all their fame, mysterious persona over their own desires and finances, just like they do over the hearts of men.

Despite the many preconceived notions and controversies surrounding their profession, the geisha embody a time-honored tradition that should never be forgotten.

For me, they're the earliest surviving symbols of girl power, carving their own strong niche in a strictly patriarchal society that forbade women to live their own lives. And I'm honestly proud to be one of them—physically for today, but forever in spirit.

Graphics Design: Ruben Joshua Cardo

A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

Where to Stop Where to Go

This summer, make it Le Monet

TIERRE Le Monet Hotel is synonymous to Baguio this summer. Located in Baguio City, the summer capital of the Philippines, the hotel is the perfect place to unwind amidst clean fresh air and mountain views.

The property is within Camp John Hay, a former US air force recreational facility that was turned over to the Philippine Government in 1991 and soon closed.

Le Monet Hotel is a quaint but charming bed chain. Its rooms offer very overlooking the picturesque view of Pine trees. The hotel is adorned by hanging crystal chandeliers designed by a famous Korean designer, Jung Myung Seo. The chandelier is made of 30,000 crystals illuminating the entire lobby area. Paintings by Jose Jesus, Jing Gulacki, Federico Aguilar and Melissa Quiwa-ian are on display.

Le Monet Hotel's all-day dining establishment, Dandi Gourmet, is under the helm of acquainted chef Bobby Goco. Enjoy a morning breakfast of croissants, jam, eggs, freshly brewed coffee, salads and rice and many more with a delicious view of Baguio's pine trees. Guests may also choose from the 'must-have' All-Day Dining and BBQ Ala Monica.

Guest rooms are complete with the finest amenities and the only hotel in Baguio with an automated heated water closet. The hotel has a heated pool and spa facilities. One of the main attractions is the water fountain show at the left and right façade of the hotel placed every day at dusk.

As an added service, Le Monet Hotel offers Le Pantajan, with staff personally assisting guests for any pick-up and drop-off service within and around the grounds of John Hay whether small or large group. All in all, Le Monet Hotel can offer a more relaxation experience for you.

Celebrate love month at Lancaster

WHILE love can be shared in so many ways all throughout the year, there is something about February that makes expressions of love more meaningful. Lancaster Hotel Manila makes you're "A Celebration of Love" that can be truly unforgettable. Take their special Valentine's room package of P3,888 per night when your book from Feb. 1 to 28. This free Bath package is inclusive of buffet breakfast for two, two glasses of wine, one hour couple's massage, complimentary Internet connection, late check-out until 2 p.m. and complimentary shuttle service to Ortigas shopping malls. Lancaster is conveniently located at 26 Chabi Street in Mandaluyong City, a few hundred meters away from the busy intersection of Ortigas along EDSA. For more information about "A Celebration of Love" package, call 633-1818, fax 633-1828, or log-on to www.lancasterhotels.com.ph or e-mail reservations@lancaster-hotels.com.ph.

Tapella Restaurant launches smart phone friendly website

TAPELLA Restaurant has launched a new interactive website, www.tapellarestaurant.com. Developed by Mark Garcia of iLink Consulting Services, the interactive layout is great for people with smart phones and ipad, designed with an emphasis on regularly updated content, useful informative and features and a more user-friendly interface. Intended not only to convey information, it also serves as an important communication portal as it features on line menus, latest wines, news, promos, gallery and more. "Everybody is on line now and most people have smart phones and tablets like the ipad. We made our website cross-browser, cross-platform and mobile friendly. Our homepage will make it easy for new and existing customers to find out about our menus, location and daily specials," said Marilen Cacho, president of Quach Group of Restaurants. Tapella is open daily from 11 a.m. until 12 a.m. Wine-at-you- can paired with tapas and cocktail it is served every Friday from 5 p.m. Dining at Tapella comes with complimentary WiFi, a premium amenity among Saudi Restaurants. Located at ground level of cosmopolitan Greenbelt 5, Tapella is surrounded by top business offices, eight theatres and high-end shops, making it the ideal spot for a quick coffee, a fashionable business lunch or a romantic dinner. For more information or reservations, call 757-2110 and 757-2111.

Sinulog goes to Baguio

THE HOTEL Elizabeth Baguio offers its guests a different Pangalagang experience. Guests can experience Cebu's Sinulog as Sinulog fiesta to Hotel Elizabeth Baguio, from Feb. 24 to 26. The Hotel's Cafe will serve Cebu Delicacies Dinner Buffet for only P488 net per person from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. with a live Sinulog dance parade during the buffet dinner. The Hotel Elizabeth Baguio also prepares something special for the lady who will be staying during the weekends. They can enjoy complimentary tea pouring, film showing and cupcake decoration classes on Feb. 26 and 27. Aside from these activities, the Hotel has prepared, guests can also try The Hotel Elizabeth's Flea Cafe. Held every weekend from 7 p.m., all their edible delicacies by cheese lover. Today's Mongolian Madness Buffet with live entertainment will let you experience the sumptuous taste of Mongolian dishes and Saturdays can never be more fun than its Gabriella Fusion Dinner Buffet with Japanese Kobe Beef and Alaskan King Crab. These offerings will surely satisfy the appetite of anyone. For more information, you may visit www.terrahotel.com, www.hotelelizabeth.com.ph, or call Central Reservations Office at (632) 912-30-30 or e-mail at reservations@terrahotelgroup.com.

Fantastic weekend promo at Linsa Park Hotel

LINSA Park Hotel (LPH) in Makar, Batangas makes weekends more exciting with its weekend packages and activities for every family and barkada. For families, the hotel offers the Fabulous Family Deal, which includes overnight accommodation with continental breakfast, free breakfast and lunch buffet for only P7,500 net, good for two adults and two children. For friends, it has the Super Barkada Delight, which includes overnight accommodation in two standard rooms, plus a bucket of beer and bar chow and complimentary breakfast, for only P4,800 net, good for four persons. To make everyone's stay at the hotel more worthwhile, LPH prepared activities for kids and adults. On Saturday, the children can enjoy their Own Prize promo for only P200 net per person, while for adults, LPH has Free Bike Ride around the hotel if tired Drive and relax the Campo Verde and free use of the fitness center and horizon pool with a professional fitness instructor. For more details, please contact Linsa Park Hotel at (043) 981-1000 or 2500 or at (0917) 500-2500. You may also e-mail events@linsaparkhotel.com or send an e-mail to linsaparkhotel.reservations@yahoo.com.

CROWNE Plaza Manila Galleria recently held a contract signing with the Philippine Hotel Association to be the organization's official host partner for their convention in May 23 to 25. Present during the signing of the agreement were (seated from left) Associate Crowne Meetings director Aimi Mariatigue, PHA president Dr. Isabel Ongsingco Jr., Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn Manila Galleria's general manager Thomas Mathias and PHA executive vice president Phil 43rd Annual Convention over-all chair Dr. Eugene Reyes. The other PHA Board members who witnessed the contract signing were (standing, from left) Dr. Raul Lapitan, director; Frederick Alegre, VP for External Affairs; Dr. Secundino Jose, vice president; Dr. Shonni Lopez, immediate past president; Dr. Joel Abanilla, treasurer; Dr. Ma. Constancia Dela-Rama and Dr. Silvestre Jimenez, directors.

A new chapter for Punta de Fabian

IT WAS more like a reunion, a renewal of friendships during the recent inauguration of Punta de Fabian Resort in Iscrin, Hinul. Its founder, Teresita Fabian Pamintuan, called the event "one of the happiest days of my life so cancer survivor." How could she not, when the people that matter to her were there?

There to support their long-time friend were former Pangasinan Joseph Estrada and his wife former First Lady Loi Ejercito. Pamintuan acknowledged Dr. Lo for entrusting her with medical missions and charity works.

"The truth is, right after my chemotherapy I did not mind the pain I was going through. What was important was to carry out the medical and relief goods operations," Pamintuan said during her speech. It was through these works that the future Punta de Fabian became the jump-off site for these missions.

The stars of the former First Couple set the stage for Punta de Fabian. During those years as a cancer patient, all Pamintuan wanted was to make her life more purposeful.

Pamintuan also extended her gratitude to Speaker Sonny Belmonte for being an exemplary husband when his wife Philippine Star founder Betty Go-Belmonte battled cancer.

She also thanked Sen. Loren Legarda for "giving me a plaque as a cancer survivor", and all her guests for their support. "It was because of you that Punta de Fabian was established," she declared.

The special event was also graced by her physician Dr. Antonio Villafuerte, whom she thanked profusely; Rep. Jun Rodriguez; Bulacan Gov. Willy and Rep. Marivic Alvarado; Mary Cedeo; Tanay Mayor Rafael Tanjuatco; and Nicol Umerlan Juris with Andrew Ynares.

The inauguration of Punta de Fabian's new four junior suites, eight executive rooms, and new lobby and the blessing of the new Wellness Gymnasium Building open a new chapter in the resort's inspiring story. Looks like Pamintuan will be welcoming even happier days ahead.

PHOTO left: Former First Lady Dra. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito, Tesi Pamintuan, Senator Loren Legarda, former Congresswoman Bathsheba Rodriguez-Castarlenas

Fire up your food passion

Till late month of February, Richmonde Café's executive chef Jason Cruz fires up your passion for good food with dishes inspired by romantic France, Italy. Featured is the Chef's Exclusive this month is a delicious 3-course meal, beautifully complemented by a glass of fine Italian wine. Your foray into an enthralling dining experience starts with a choice of an insalata of Mixed Greens with Strawberry Mist, Parmesan Cheese and Strawberry Dressing or Chef's Fresh Zuppa of the Day. Then comes the selection of entrées to choose from—the Grilled Beef Tenderloin marinated in Herbs with Brioche in Gravy and Herb Mashed Potato and the Poached Salmon with Tomato Salsa and Red Pesto Alfredo Sauce. Finally, the delectable dolce of Baked Strawberry Cheesecake with Strawberry Compote and Strawberry Sauce brings this dreamy meal to an end. Richmonde Café's Exclusives is available at remaining days of February for only P700 net. Richmonde Café is at the 2nd floor of Richmonde Hotel Ortigas, 21 San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. For inquiries or reservations, please call 688-4410 or 638-7777 extension 3400.

Discover the beauty of raw

DISCOVER the beauty of raw as Sugarbowl — hosts that nourish collaborate with multi-talented certified raw food chef and lifestyle coach Mona Lisa Realonda for a half-day raw food cuisine lecture and gourmet raw food preparation class for those seeking an effective natural alternative to facelifts, surgery, weight loss treatments or depriving calorie restrictions. Workshop is on April 14, 2 p.m. at the Sugarbowl at The RBS 28 in 8 Lifestyle Centre in Sucat's Village, Makati City. E-mail angela@sugarbowl.ph.com or call (632) 09 17-8229-555 for more information and reservations. P2,250 per person with incredibly healthy and delicious helpings of all dishes prepared. P250 discount for senior citizens, pairs, couples, students and attendees pre-paying. Do the workshop through Sugarbowl's BPI Savings account. P1,800 for prepayments made before April 13 at the store or through bank transfer. Sugarbowl, a healthy eats restaurant-store, is also located at the GF Health Eats Building, 23B Wilson Street, West Greenhills in San Juan (between Ortigas Ave. and EDSA). Follow us on Twitter @sugarbowlph.

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Big Dreamers, Big Winners

Treasury manager Phia Acosta and dentist Nerissa Hamarang are two more lucky clients who have experienced firsthand the good things that come when you bank with EastWest.

Wife and mother of two Phia Acosta is not one to the medical finance. For 13 years now, she has been working as a treasury executive for a company which manages a chain of popular restaurants around the metro. Being in the food and restaurant industry, Phia sees no problem in mingling with different kinds of people.

Her job has inspired this commerce, science and accounting alumna from Jose Rizal University to someday put up her own restaurant. Or maybe her own spa. Whatever she decides on in the future, Phia prepares for it by adhering to a traditional way of financial management—disciplined budgeting.

Like many other clients, Phia has been very content with EastWest as her banking partner, noting how accommodating the bank is to clients, whether they're big companies or individual depositors like her. In fact, her employer, the Bistro Group of Companies, is also a corporate client which had won twice in the bank's Dream Big Win Big monthly raffle—a Samsung netbook and an Acer Iconia tablet.

Another lucky client is Nerissa Hamarang, a practicing dentist in her mid-30s. An EastWest Bank credit card holder, Nerissa also won a brand new Samsung netbook in Dream Big Win Big's first monthly draw.

When one thinks of ideal travel destinations, the usual locations—Paris, Hawaii, Japan, etc.—come to mind. Not for Nerissa. This adventurous woman would someday like to visit Kyrgyzstan and immerse herself in a road much less travelled. She knows that with careful financial discipline and a partner like EastWest, this dream can easily be within reach.

Like Phia, she believes in another time-tested financial management tip: save first before spending. As for her bank, Nerissa sees through to tagline, Your Dream Our Focus, because she has experienced firsthand the benefit in these words. "EastWest Bank has been very good to me," she said.

Since October 2011, EastWest Bank has been giving away brand new electronic gadgets to lucky clients through its Dream Big Win Big monthly raffle promo. So far, the bank has raffled off Samsung netbooks, Acer Iconia tablets and BlackBerry smartphones to more than 200 lucky clients.

But the biggest prizes await lucky winners at the grand draw on April 13, 2012 when the Water Dragon brings more majestic gifts: a one bedroom condominium unit with parking space at the Beaufort, two Mercedes Benz cars and up to P1.7 million in cash, all tax-free.

For more information about the Dream Big Win Big raffle promo, visit EastWestBanker.com or an EastWest Bank branch nearest you. You may also call 888-1700 or our toll-free hotline 1-800-10-845-1177. For DTI-NCR Permit No. 8918, Series of 2011.

EastWest Bank SE Pajo branch head Rasul Abreo hands over a brand new Samsung netbook to Dream Big Win Big monthly raffle winner Phia Acosta (right).

Nerissa Hamarang is another lucky winner of EastWest's monthly raffle promo that will end with a grand draw on April 13, 2012.

Editor Nestor U. Torre • Associate Editor Rito P. Asilo

SATURDAY Special

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NOW SHOWING

Clooney's career best fuses humor and heartbreak

By Rito P. Asilo

GEORGE CLOONEY delivers the finest performance of his career in "The Descendants," Alexander Payne's exquisite fusion of heartbreak and humor...and one of last year's best films. Clooney and his co-actors deserve hearty pats on the back for turning in crackup-worthy portrayals that don't rely on navel-gazing or self-indulgent caterwauling to sustain viewers' interest and empathy.

With the imminent sale of 25,000 acres of unspoiled Hawaiian land owned by the family of lawyer Matt King (Clooney), clan-busting accident of his wife, Elizabeth, couldn't have come at a worse time. As Liz fights for her life while in a coma, however, Matt learns about her infidelity from his rebellious 17-year-old daughter, Alex (Shailene Woodley).

Road trip.

Acknowledging that his negligence has been at the root of hearty Liz's "stubborness," Matt decides to embark on a life-changing road trip with Alex and his other daughter, Scottie (Amara Miller), with Alex's kooky soccer boyfriend, Sid (Nick Krause), in tow—to inform friends and family members about his wife's worsening condition.

But, there's one person Matt is dreading to meet—realtor Brian Speer, the other man in Liz's life, who just happens to be happily married! Worse, the guy stands to gain from the sale of the King clan's real estate gem.

The dramatic upheavals in Matt's life soon culled straight out of overwrought

CLOONEY'S 11

CLOONEY. Nuanced performance.

Tough cookies

By Nestor U. Torre

IN SCREEN film annals, women have been generally relegated to supporting or villain roles, with the exception of productions like "Wonder Woman" of-yore), and in local films, female action superstars like Coby Favis and Alicia Vergel. This year, however, four relatively-mild-mannered performances has radically changed, due to the feisty female portrayals of Paula Peñaso in "Ghost Protocol" and Gina Carano in "Haywire."

In "Ghost Protocol," Peñaso was the only female member of the crack team of agents led by Tom Cruise. But, she more than held her own, when it came to "snap, crackle and pop!" fight scenes and daring stunts, which she executed not just with feline aplomb,

TOUGH 10

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Framed protagonists boost diverting actioners

By Nestor U. Torre

IN KNOCK Knockout's latest thriller, "Haywire," Gina Carano's lead character is a young but vastly experienced secret agent who brilliantly executes the rescue of a Chinese "dissident" being held hostage in Barcelona. Imagine her shock, therefore, when on another top-secret mission, she discovers his dead body...in Ireland! What is going on here?

It turns out that Carano's character has been deceived...by her own superiors! She belatedly discovers that the dissident wasn't being held hostage, he was being kept in a safehouse for his own protection against evil forces bent on eliminating him...who turn out to be playing furtive games with her head.

She then realizes that she's been sent to Ireland in order to set her own "elimination," as the nefarious plot's stories is buried with her. She has to beat her assassin in the parade and drown to save her life and avenge herself against the traitors who pretend to be looking out for her welfare.

It's give the gripping events that follow an ironic context, Carano's dad is revealed to be a popular writer of espionage novels. He's a master of his craft...but, when it comes to describing his daughter in real life, he's woefully inept.

Also ironic is the fact that one of her principal stuntmen is her ex-lover. So, she arranges herself on him with particular fervor, timing her final assault to the exploding, not from a hail of bullets recently respelled ballistic—but from drowning.

WORTHINGTON. In your face melodramatics and deft physical action.

coming role as a beach, where one of his soldier is trapped between two rocks, and he ends up

Then there, bolstering now the usual thriller chiller as to hunt and make his unique mark on the genre, one ironic twist after another.

Aside from his brilliantly conceived and executed chase and action scenes, the filmmaker is deeply and most resourcefully interested in his characters from a psychological points of view, sharing valuable insights with viewers on what makes some furious tutti: see to be levels...and vice-versa.

'Man On A Ledge'

Contrastingly, "Man On A Ledge" is more interested in the machinations of a bad cop allegedly gone wrong, and in that sort to jail for his "sins." It turns out that the disgraced lawman (Sam Worthington) was framed...and the only way he can prove his innocence and put the powerful men who tricked him behind bars is to stage a threatened "suicide" leap from a tall building near his nemesis' headquarters.

It's all to-your-face melodramatics mixed with deft physical action, but it's generally effective...until the film's makers get carried away and come up with a big, dam-busy finale that's too lurid and over-the-top to be taken seriously even by undemanding fans of disposable thrillers and shillers like this one.

Still, what's good on below is quite diverting, especially the complicated attempts of the ex-cop's brother and his girlfriend to help him get the goods on his all-powerful antagonist, so the film still ends up as view-worthy.

Clooney's career best fuses humor and heartbreak

From page E1

CRUZ AND LOCKE. More to intimacy than lovemaking sex.

television—but...Nolan's film is beautifully cold and unexpectedly low-key. Moreover, what it lacks in showy confrontations it more than makes up for in stirring insights on love and forgiveness. It'll make you cry one minute and laugh the next.

Clooney finds his characterization to nuanced perfection—his moving scenes with his sick wife toward the end of the film is one of the production's dramatic highlights. With Leonardo DiCaprio ("J. Edgar"), Michael Fassbender ("Shame") and Joseph Gordon-Levitt ("50/50") out of the best actor race, Clooney is on his way to winning his second Oscar statuette (after 2005's "Syriana"), with only Jean Dujardin ("The Artist") standing in his way.

'Unofficially Yours'

John Lloyd Cruz and Angel Locsin's romantic starrer, "Unofficially Yours," fuses comedy and dramedy—but has the similarly themed "My Cantor Heart," With Carlo Garcia Mollina at its helm, the movie shows losing and reaping goes beyond bemoaning and lamenting its narrative threads around the tale of cynical journalist, Cris Bitterson (Locsin), who pushes casual hook-ups over long-term commitments...but, one ill domain-turned-writer Marlon Gabriel (Cruz) can help it!

As to star-crossed lovers, Angel Locsin and John Lloyd Cruz didn't have much chemistry on the TV thriller, "Imortal"...but, that previous partnership helped their respective romantic kinship that makes their characters' "sweeties" scenes in Mollina's film candidate-valid-viability.

The movie showcases Cruz's knack for rom-com humor and Locsin's evolving dramatic chops. Aside from the young leads' restored portrayals, Bella Aquijanai (as Cris' broken-hearted mom) and Boots Lehmann (as one of Mocha's buddies) score on strong.

Also leaving a strong impression on viewers is the comebacking Shaina Uascis who, despite his short screen time, makes people understand why he betrayed her bff. Angel's character broken-and-bitter.

Initially, the movie makes a case for young people's proclivity for no-strings-attached flirts—only to turn in unusual tale around...and prove there's more to intimacy than lovelessness!

Ayala Malls Cinemas

MOVIE TIME

GLORIETTA 4

1: HUGO (3D)
12:00, 3:05, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30 AM
2: THE DESCENDANTS
12:40, 3:10, 5:40, 8:10, 10:40 AM
3: GHOST RIDER: SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE (3D)
12:00, 2:05, 4:10, 6:15, 8:20, 10:25 AM
4: BREAKING WIND
11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30 AM
5: GHOST RIDER: SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE
1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00 AM
6: UNOFFICIALLY YOURS
11:15, 1:20, 3:40, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30 AM
7: SAFEHOUSE, THE VOW
12:50, 3:50 and 9:10pm, 7:40, 10:00 AM

GREENBELT 1

1: GHOST RIDER
12:40, 1:50, 4:15, 6:35, 8:40, 9:45
2: UNOFFICIALLY YOURS
12:25, 2:45, 4:55, 7:10, 9:25 AM

GREENBELT 2

1: GHOST RIDER: SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE
3:20, 5:15, 9:40, 11:50 AM
2: GHOST RIDER: SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE (3D)
12:00, 2:10, 4:25, 6:35, 10:45 AM
3: THE DESCENDANTS
1:30, 3:50, 6:20, 8:45, 11:00 AM
4: HUGO
3:05, 6:00, 8:30, 11:10 AM
5: SAFEHOUSE, THE VOW
1:00, 3:00 and 9:30, 5:40, 7:50, 11:00 AM

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1: UNOFFICIALLY YOURS
2: THE VOW
12:00, 3:05, 5:45, 8:15, 10:45 AM
3: STAR WARS EPISODE 1 (3D)/HUGO (3D)
1:00, 3:50, 6:45, 9:00 AM
4: THE DESCENDANTS
12:00, 3:05, 5:45, 8:15, 10:45 AM
5: SAFE HOUSE
12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45 AM

AYALA CENTER CEBU

1: THE VOW
1:00, 3:20, 5:55, 7:15, 9:45 AM
2: UNOFFICIALLY YOURS
3: STAR WARS EPISODE 1 (3D)/CHRONICLE
12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:30 AM, 9:00, 9:30 AM
4: SAFEHOUSE
1:30, 3:50, 6:20, 7:00, 9:10 AM

MARQUEE

1: THE VOW
12:15, 2:45, 4:55, 7:05, 9:15 AM
2: STAR WARS EPISODE 1 (3D)/HUGO (3D)
1:30, 3:50, 6:40, 9:15 AM
3: SAFE HOUSE
1:15, 3:30, 6:20, 9:00 AM
4: UNOFFICIALLY YOURS

MARKET! MARKET!

1: HUGO (3D)
12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:00 AM
2: BREAKING WIND
3: THE DESCENDANTS
4: STAR WARS EPISODE 1 (3D)
12:45, 2:30, 4:15, 7:00 AM
5: UNOFFICIALLY YOURS
6: THE VOW
11:30, 2:15, 4:45, 6:50, 9:10 AM
7: SAFEHOUSE
11:00, 1:50, 4:30, 7:30, 9:50 AM

TRINOMA

1: CHRONICLE
12:40, 1:50, 4:00, 6:10, 8:20, 10:30 AM
2: JOURNEY 2
12:45, 2:50, 5:00, 7:40, 10:00 AM
3: WOMAN IN BLACK
12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10, 10:00 AM
4: STAR WARS EPISODE 1 (3D)
1:45, 4:00, 7:15, 10:00 AM
5: THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO
12:00, 3:30, 7:00, 10:30 AM
6: THE VOW
1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30 AM
7: SAFEHOUSE
1:00, 3:30, 6:10, 7:50, 10:30 AM

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1: STAR WARS EPISODE 1 (3D)/HUGO (3D)
11:30, 12:30 AM/1:30, 7:00, 9:30 AM
2: THE VOW
12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00 AM
3: UNOFFICIALLY YOURS
4: CONFIDENCE
1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:30, 9:45 AM

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Rob Lowe: Hollywood survivor

LOWE. Very public ups and downs.

LOS ANGELES—Going by the odds against him—twin enemies, booze and drugs, a heart-stirringly alcoholic past, and a sex-tape scandal—Rob Lowe should be a has-been by now. But, he's still very much around, is named in "Unstoppables: The Down Primrose Story," a TV biopic that just aired in the UK, where he played the title role, a Chicago cop who is an accused valet killer.

The actor is a regular on the critically acclaimed TV comedy series, "Parks and Recreation," his own fine autobiography out, "Stories I Only Tell My Friends," that—surprise, surprise—the New York Times praised. Most endearingly, throughout the book, Mr. Lowe emerges as a canny observer of both himself and others, and as someone whose emotions have grown increasingly drama-over-time."

Rob credits much of his survival, personally and professionally, to his wife of 20+ years, (former) footballer, lowe, with whom he has two sons, Matthew, 16, and John, 16.

"It's interesting what you think you're going to write about, and what you actually end up writing," Rob said about his book. Certainly, my dad—one of those days so you can see him."

Rob shared other factors that contribute to his enduring power: "I think it's being flexible, not being encrusted in your views, being willing to take chances, and to take a step backward for the possibility of taking two steps forward to get there," he said. "Many times anything, it's trying to figure out what is your unique skill set. Nice to just do what you can do, but to do what only you can do. There are a lot of guys I've played that other people could have played—and there are some parts I played that only I could portray. Incredibly, those are the ones that work. That applies in business, writing and any aspect of your life. It's inconceivable that you are able to figure out what that thing is that only you have."

Only in Hollywood

Robert T. Nebbles

dressed in a black tee and jeans, Rob was relaxed and humorous as he fielded questions in our press association's office.

"The book ends up becoming a love letter to the woman who is my true partner, who helped me become who I am today. Like all marriages, ours is so complicated, passionate, interesting and sexy today as it was when we were married 20 years ago. I also knew that marriage is a mystery. I'm figuring it out on a daily basis. My wife keeps me guessing. I never know what I'm going to get when I wake up if I'm in the doghouse. You don't want to know—but, trust me, I'm in the doghouse."

He cracked about the time he was filming "Unstoppable," "In a boxcar, when I was playing Drew Barrymore, apparently. I was not so good."

Genetics

At 47, Rob still has his "first flush" good looks. "Take care of myself," he said. "I don't drink. I haven't for 21 years by May. That puts me on the moderation game, right? Not active. I came from three weeks in Hawaii. We had a break in Turks and Interaction," as if one big mare surfing four hours a day a lot of times with my boys. That keeps me athletic. I take care of my skin. I have a regimen. Then, there's genetics. Just pick the old fashioned luck. I'm going to bring

Best friends

How is he as a father? "It's hard to self-diagnose, right?" he replied. Laughing, he added, "That's why we have doctors. I'd like to think that, as a father, I am very involved, very hands-on. My kids are my favorite people in the world. They're my best friends, even though some say that a parent's role isn't to be a best friend to his kids.

"Times are compelling concepts, but I want to be best friends with my kids. I love them. They're my favorite people to talk to, hang out, travel and experience life with. They don't need me to be their best friend—they need me to be their mentor, disciplinarian, and all those things. Trying to find that sweet spot in the challenge of parenting. I'd like to think I'm on

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NOW SHOWING

Tough cookies

From page 01

but also with crunchingly and crushingly believable power.

For her part, in the current selection, "Haywire," Carano is no less than the principal protagonist, with the stellar likes of Michael Douglas, Antonio Banderas, Ewen McGregor and Michael Fassbender "reduced" to her "supporting" players. That's because the movie's central plot revolves around "top agents" efforts to kill her, in order to get away with a top-secret "rescue" mission that, of course, turns out to have had the opposite intent...and effect.

Emergence

What's interesting about the emergence of Heroes and Carano as the movie's new breed of female action stars is the fact that both of them don't just execute their fight scenes with believable strength and power, but they're also exceedingly easy on the eyes. Gone are the days when rough women took care of the action, while a different set of sexy actresses took over when the script called for bedroom exhibitionist. These days, stars like Carano and Palmer can fill both requirements—no sweat and no problem!

In Carano's case, she even has the official credentials to assert her claim to the movie's female action queen throne and status, because she's a champion fighter on TV. Simply put, the lady can't make the shift to acting with sufficient success, however, she does right fine.

And, she's also a turn-on in sexy scenes...quite seamlessly, just for, Eric, posing mantis-like, she sequentially falls her paramours, who turn out to be Michael Fassbender and Michael Douglas.

Now that our two tough cookies have succeeded in making the female action component a major part of some recent films, we wonder if the trend will catch on to other movies and television productions. And, if so, who will be the next screen's new action queens—perhaps a couple of our homegrown tough cookies from "Survivor Philippines, Celebrity Edition"?

Training

But, even those relatively more experienced talents will have a lot of training to undergo before they can match the high and tough standards set by Patton and Carano in "Ghost Protocol" and "Haywire." Still, the effort and pain should be worth it, because the fruits of such efforts many and yummy!

Postscript: Just this month, a third new female action star has joined the ranks: Olivia Wilde, Cameron Rodriguez, and she creates her own kind of sexy and known excitement in "Man On A Ledge."

—Keep 'em coming, Army ladies!

SATURDAY Special

Whitney Houston takes her final bow

HOUSTON: A once-rising star pop music's tragic, troubled queen.

By Rito P. Asilo

WHAT IS it about gifted performers that can drive some self-destructive, tragic figures? Michael Jackson and Amy Winehouse are still being "eulogized" by posthumous recordings ("Michael," "Immortal" and "Lioness"), as the ring in fans of Whitney Houston—pop music's troubled queen—cues an even gloomier cloud over a music industry in dire need of positive role models.

The sketchy circumstances of Whitney's death are still being investigated, but her passing comes as a

Power to the teenager

By Nestor U. Torre

FILM PRODUCERS believe that today's movie audience is mostly made up of people younger than 30, hence the proliferation of films for parents, adolescents, tweens, teens and

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Novelty quickly overstays its welcome

By Nestor U. Torre

LOCAL TV has launched many "stellar" chefs in cooking shows that have given viewers a taste for fine cuisine, but we daresay that "flavor of the new year," Boy Logan, is in a class all his own. While most chefs on TV do their best to impress viewers with their sophistication and mastery of haute cuisine, Logan does quite the opposite—he shuns his best (or worst) to let everyone know that he's "just folks," had us watch his way up the kitchen hierarchy, and makes yummy food that anybody can cook—and enjoy.

It is this "everyman" quality and lack of pretension that endears the new TV star to viewers of his cooking show.

Logan's most charming asset may be Rich Woodall-esque wit, his natural flair for "spontaneous" comedy. No need for "comic relief" when he's around!

On the other hand, the "comedy chefs" bag of entertaining tricks is so thin that, after watching his shows a number of times, the viewer may feel a bit antsy for more reliably professional dimensions and information.

Recently, for instance, we caught his "Iron-version" cooking show and were momentarily entertained by his "signature" street-speak humor, and his antics with a skillet or knife.

Hard drive

After a while, however, we noted that he was having a hard time keeping the "fun" pedal going as he cooked, resulting in too much "dead air"—the bane of radio TV performers.

His culinary expertise is for of help, but she didn't appear to be a trained emperor, either, so she too fell short.

What can the show do to keep its proceedings more reliably informative, interesting and diverting? First, it should make its pro host understand that novelty is fine, but it works only for a short while.

LOGAN. His bag of entertaining tricks.

As the weeks pass, viewers notice that the host is running out of fresh things to say and do, as he has to fill in the blanks quickly or they'll lose interest. "Swoosh" and "spontaneity" can go from initial wow-ow to overkill and turn-off in only a few months.

Perhaps chef Logan can be given a more dependable entertaining and professional co-host? Maybe some really fussy celebrities can be invited as members of the studio audience, to camp it to the dishes being cooked or do a hopefully humorous running commentary to each of the show's "dead air" problems? Whatever.

Novelty is loads of fun, but it quickly overstays its welcome.

NEWPORT CINEMAS

THE DESCENDANTS 9:25am, 11:45am, 2:10pm, 4:35pm, 6:45pm, 9:05pm, 11:25pm
THE VOW 12:45pm, 3:00pm, 5:15pm, 7:40pm, 10:15pm
GHOST RIDER 10:15am, 12:30pm, 4:00pm, 6:40pm, 9:00pm, 11:20pm
HUGO in 3D 9:15am, 12:00pm, 3:00pm, 5:45pm, 8:45pm
GHOST RIDER in 3D 1:30pm, 4:15pm, 7:00pm, 9:30pm, 11:55pm
UNOFFICIALLY YOURS 9:45am, 12:00pm, 2:15pm, 4:30pm, 7:15pm, 9:30pm, 12:00am, 2:30am

'Pureza' tackles *hacenderos*' untold story

By Rica Arevalo

AFTER DIRECTING the feature film, "Ligaw (Rain)" and "Tanners," Jay Abello is excited about his first full-length documentary, "Pureza: The Story of Negros Sugar," which examines the dying sugar industry of Negros.

Growing up, Abello, whose family is involved in the sugar industry, had a love-hate relationship with Negrense culture. He believed that the suburbia never appreciated "Filipino" film's producers came to me (they never have before), I asked them if they were willing to admit to their guilt. They said they wanted to tell it their story."

He further discloses, "When we started talking about the project, it became clear that no body told the story from the inside. I thought I knew this story well. But, when I interviewed people, I realized I didn't."

Footage

The film shows the turbulent and extravagant lifestyles of Negros' sugar barons. For close to two years, Abello shot 400 hours' worth of footage, now narrowed down to two hours and 15 minutes for its premiere on HBO Asia/cut for the "Smells

ABELLO. Love-hate relationship with Negrense culture.

wood: Cinema Reloaded (2012)."

What is his dad's goal? Jay replies, "I want people to to think what a *hacendero* truly is. The sugar industry—no doubt that it's going to 'die' soon. What's going to happen to Negros Basin? Sharing knowledge of its history will help to do something about it?"

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

1 SAFE HOUSE
2 UNOFFICIALLY YOURS
3 GHOST RIDER SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE
4 BREAKING WIND
5 THE VOW
6 Cinema 6 Cinema 7 THE DESCENDANTS

NOW SHOWING

5 OSCAR NOMINATIONS
GOLDEN GLOBE WINNER
BEST PICTURE
BEST ACTOR GEORGE CLOONEY

George Clooney
The Descendants

POWER PLANT CINEMA

THE DESCENDANTS - 8:00
THE VOW - 8:00
GHOST RIDER SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE (DIGITAL 3D) - 8:00

Power . . . from page F1

young adult viewers.

Going by that yardstick, the current film, "Chronicle," should do very well indeed with moviegoers, because it plays directly to the "power fantasies" of otherwise insecure and powerless teenagers.

In young protagonist is an especially confused and conflicted bundle of love and turmoil. His mother is desperately ill, his father is an emotionally distant and oftentimes absent father, and everybody thinks he's a social ass.

—Still, they go that exactly right—but, for good and bad, something really strange happens to him and his two friends. They get zapped by "something" that gives them special powers that make them potentially superhuman!

They still look like the geeks they used to be, but now they can levitate, push and lift the heavies objects around, and perform "magic tricks" that are but, we frankly can't.

Trouble is, they aren't keep their fantastic secret to themselves—and they start to test their powers and flex them using them for other people's welfare. Instead, the story's main protagonist, Andrew (Dane DeHaan), sets them to get back at the many people who've done him wrong...with tragic consequences.

Consequences

This is where the initially thrilling and imaginative production starts to unravel and turn so weird and spaced-out for its own good. Part of the exaggerated unravelling is method, because it warns how powerful are the awakenings of their own unbridled anger and hate.

But, it gets to be so over the top that the "moral lesson" is forgotten, and the focus on the thrill and rapture of vengeance for its own sake sends out dangerous signals to young moviegoers.

On point of filmmaking, the movie's first half entertains and excites, because it presents the youths' special powers in a refreshingly believable way. The performances are similarly believable and felt, a rare quality to find in most Dude films these days.

But, when matters finally erupt, the movie's story reaches and visually goes as berserk as its by some demented "teen," to achieve its "apocalyptic" finale.

Here, we know that some teenagers do get excited crazy, but the makers of this movie aren't callous and immature youths, so they should know better than to go for the cheap "genre" on this incredible wide and tragic path.

By freaking out so spectacularly—and mindlessly—they "teleport" their movie's young viewers with a deadly fantasy and downright lie, instead of helping them fancy us and someone their real problems.

—Make up, everybody, it really is only a movie!

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 GHOST RIDER 2: SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE 3D
2 THE VOW
3 UNOFFICIALLY YOURS
4 GHOST RIDER 2: SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE
BREAKING WIND
THE DESCENDANTS

Argenta Events Cinemas Cinema Cinemalyn Cinemaone Cinema Cinemalyn Cinema Cinemalyn Cinema Cinemalyn

Why some Hollywood stars never caught my fancy

By Bryan Curtis

HISTORIANS CUFF. A matter of taste.

JENNIFER JONES and Charleton Heston are two of the Hollywood stars I never liked. So many actors, directors, producers. It's a matter of taste, of course.

In contrast, I like Judy Garland, Ava Gardner, Grace Kelly, Julie Andrews, Ingrid Bergman, Marlon Brando, James Stewart, Gary Cooper, Helen Hayes and Meryl Streep. Steven Spielberg's films always enchant me.

Whenever I'm feeling blue, I watch "E.T." I clap when Invisible Man Claude Rains and Bugs Bunny outwit their captors. I throw an occasional woo-woo at my soldier's cynicism. I likewise enjoy the "Indiana Jones" series.

Heston is my least favorite Hollywood star because, as actors' actor who got typecast as Moses, Michelangelo, the Pope, I always felt that he was portraying the same character — such as predictably "sculpted" as the stone.

He is the point upon which the "manic-and-"mediocre" actors like Marlon Brando, Montgomery Clift and James Dean.

Another Oscar winner I dislike was Jennifer Jones, who, like Dorothy Malone and Natalie Wood, was known for her "wrenching" cries.

Since I have always admired Brando, I didn't appreciate actors who copied him, like Rod Steiger. Paul Newman looked like Brando — but, like Ill Wallach, his performances were distinctive.

As I get older, I looked out more keenly for signs of "acting". I hated "old-style" acting by Deborah Kerr and Audrey Hepburn, who are rather limited actresses whose "technique" includes covering their faces or quivering their voices in key dramatic moments. This is something that Meryl Streep never does.

Dialogue

The acting tests before Streep, Katharine Hepburn, Astaire) lost dialogue. Gar. Standard himself had the same style. Cary Grant went on for three same "gimmicks," which were typical of his era.

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11 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS WINNER

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
THEATRE MAP

Madonna pens book for children

By Hector G. Torres

HERE PEOPLE let middle-agers choose themselves with the optimistic few out. "Like father, like son," said Madonna, 52, of her son, Rocco, 11. "Well, if that works for you." Rocco's father tossed and throw his own can't be quite as sanguine about their long-term career prospects.

In an industry that values youth and perfect looks above other assets, many stars in their 40s and 50s struggle with the age-related retirement from the "real" industry to relish they give the best and most beautiful years of their photogenic lives.

Exceptions

Happily, there are exceptions to that relative rule, and the incredibly determined Jay and spirit of the Lizard Queen. This season, they are best exemplified by Betty White, who's turned a career-low 90, and by Madonna, who at 53 is by no means a has-been, and to find her just launched "celebrity" that will keep her in the public eye for years to come.

After the month hit that was her appearance on the Super Bowl, Madonna is now riding high on her first effort as live-film director with "W.E.," her film on Wallis Simpson, and the homes that the song the score for the production has been enjoying.

In addition, her new albums and international concert tours are hits, good positive that she's still very much in step with the musical times, thanks to her uniquely powerful to produced

artistic conversation.

Live shows and today there Madonna's new show that with fans is her forte into the world of literature, as a series of stories for young readers. She published her first book, "The English Roses," in 2003, and it was so eagerly anticipated that it was released in more than 100 countries. Story Ons, this's readers from more such books, which received similar attention and acclaim.

At first blush, one tends to think that Madonna's kids books for kids have done relatively well mainly due to her celebrity cachet and pulling power, not necessarily because she's a great writer and storyteller. For one part, however, we had a change of mind—and

touch—recently when we read her second book, "Mr. Peabody's Apples." —they the lady can write!

Hear is the point...the writer not just to divert and delight, but also to impart a lesson. "Be easy"—last lightly, without breathtaking her young readers with the "significance" of the character, teaching point she seeks to impart.

Specifically, "Mr. Peabody's Apples"—is Madonna's rewording and updating of a 100-year-old story that was told to her by her Kabbalist teacher. The original storyteller, Rabbi Haim Vital thought it up to demonstrate "the sin of gossip," and here's no exception. Madonna's choose them carefully to avoid causing hasty to others."

Adaptation

In her updated adaptation, Madonna sets the cautionary tale in a modern setting, set not Heaven. It's told from the point of view of a boy named Billy Little, who thought a lot of his weekend Little League baseball coach, Mr. Peabody.

One day, another boy, Tommy, tells Billy about "stealing" an apple from a fruit vendor—and enlisted to tell his friends. The following week, Mr. Peabody again get an apple without paying for it, and Tommy and other kids one him do it—and again spread the word about the offender's perfect coach and teacher's major "flaw."

Eventually, people stated every from Mr. Peabody's weekend baseball games, and he wondered why. Finally, Billy spoke up and told him why. Before things ago, Mr. Peabody took Billy to the fruit market, and the owner cheated everything up by explaining that he and Mrs. Peabody had no agreement that the vendors would give them an apple every week—and pay for all of the apples he'd gotten at the end of the week.

Things are not as they seem, indeed. And, as author Madonna has let Mr. Peabody says everything up in the end, "It's impossible to undo the damage that you have done by spreading the rumor that I am a thief. Next time, don't be so quick to judge a person. —And, remember the power of your words!"

Ogie and Michael V's comic tandem gets high marks

By Andy Bush

RAMON SOLIS, television host of the comic tandem of Ogie Alcasid and Michael V is one reason why I watch "Bubble Gang." They're so natural, and their characters' names—Ismol the supercontroller, which is common among comedians. They're even more offbeat and funnier than their gay counterparts when they're on drag!

"I must also commend Michael V for coming up with fantastic costumes and make-up. Especially in the episode on "Get Bishop's" opening number every Saturday."

Other notes:

Mar Alcasid, student: "Digging the Optical Sheets Round. That part of Quiapo they showed up was actually the area beside my house. I'm sure of it. Also, I'm friends with Ogie's cousin Jay Alcasid. And he was also present in the episode. Super fun!"

Carmeluck 360

Angelo Ilust, Sunnyside, "Pinoyme Tribespeak Tune Series

VELASQUEZ: Got nominated to host last round previously.

riddle on TV to promote his television show with husband Ogie Alcasid. As expected of brand-new sitcom, Ogie has got on considerable weight. But, I'm glad to know that she is determined to shed the unwanted pounds in preparation for her comeback bid. I hope other stars with weight problems would be motivated by Ogie's—we'd to their audience to lose the story!

And, finally, a note from TV host Tintin Bautista: "Thanks to fellow hostess Aimee Gonzalez for sending me coupons. Yes—not FIFA," on "Good Morning Club!—I'm glad that I am able to send food to you in a snow!"

E-mail: bandyabs@ yahoo.com

Why some. . .

From page F1

Lilian and Dorothy Gish were faithful followers of "classical" acting. With his round eyebrows and darting eyes, John Barrymore was another "classical" actor. On the other hand, then performances of Spencer Tracy and Gary Cooper hardly were better than technique. Instead, their members styles are as timeless as their classic interviews. It's no wonder why Ingrid Bergman said of Cooper: "I thought he didn't do enough to be a screen—until I saw the finished product."

Chaitanya's visit

DIVINE libration, there's an interactive story about compassion and forgiveness involving Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who lived more than 500 years ago.

He declared that anyone could get closer to the Supreme Lord by chanting His Names and singing His praises.

One day, he was invited by a devotee to eat at his home. But, the host's son-in-law, Amogha, ridiculed Chaitanya for calling out exactly like his name. Enraged that he chased his son-in-law out of the house!

The host thought, "The sculptures states that when a person mentions great souls, his life is consequently compromised, because the law of karma immediately takes effect."

Soon after, the son-in-law fell ill with cholera. As soon as he heard about this, Chaitanya went to see Amogha and said to him compassionately, "The heart of a brahmana is very clean by nature—therefore, it's a proper place for the Lord. Why did you chant My name to take shelter in and contaminate a purified place?

"However, due to your unwavering faith in Me, you will be saved by my kind mercy."

Amogha begged for forgiveness from Chaitanya and was immediately healed. He gave up his foolhardy attitude and cashed his tongue from being critical of others.

Lotus Pond

N. Valencia and S. Bhavsar

A special Valentine treat

CELEBRITIES! Jay Sullivan on Feb. 15 in Tercero's Silay Cellar, Vikal st., San Antonio Village, Makati City—a special Valentine treat! Its owner, The Tolls, a friend since our flying days at PAL, created gourmet food. She played Whitney Houston's songs all night!

My list of special guests included Winston Ukaton, Benny Milan, Norma Bonnelo Encinas, Gem Lanuza, Cherry Allison, Olivia Ramos, Ed Cabrera, Mr. Ang Bee, Gallejo, Eldar Bustos, Joy Bugo, Jr. Becky Singson, MF Jocelano, Elodia Jimenez, Jr. Jimmy Jacbo, Frank Tercero, Chris Alcantara Tan, Ramon Cruz, Jolie Ng-Chan, Jasmine Alfaro to their LINE and IG mates Eugenia Duran.

Special, indeed, my "family" has grown through the years!

At this point, I consider myself a happy person. I've survived life's challenges with few ones to show for it. I have a wonderful family, my children, grandchildren in Boracay, and roaming many different people who love photography.

My life has been worthwhile—raising four beautiful children in a generation ever different from mine. I've met many women, my favorite celebrities to pursue my interests in the fields of education and communication. I somehow my happiness in family and friends!

***

Join our Mandaue Photo Safari from March to May. Check out monthly safari meets. Prospect costs only 500+ EACH, or visit our studio at no. 329, LRC Bridge Plaza, Barangay Cabancalan, Cebu City.

Whitney Houston takes her final bow

From page F1

blues to fans and admirers who thought she was already comeback-bound.

For years, the 48-year-old pop diva struggled with substance abuse and a tumultuous marriage. But, by the time she released her multi-platinum album, "I Look To You" (which debuted at No. 1), in 2009, she declared herself a changed man.

Her return wasn't as rosy as everyone hoped, however. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak—and, to Whitney's ears, her five-octave voice just wasn't cooperating.

Facility

After a series of cancelled shows and uneven performances, sadly unconfirmed on YouTube and various social networking sites, she again cancelled after a brief run. Her drug and alcohol dependence in West had just come.

Her Grammy appearance on Feb. 12 would have vindicated [and beautifully capped off] her bid to regain lost ground—but, it wasn't meant to be. When Whitney's audience saw instead, was her sister Hudson earnestly singing "I Will Always Love You"—a moving musical tribute that sadly underscored the unique quiet storm that had set Houston apart from other talented belters in [The song a note No. 1 on the Billboard chart.]

In her prime, Whitney could effortlessly scale those stratospheric notes without sacrificing the gentle tones required by the heart's innermost tragedy tunes. Her show-stopping "Soundtracks" renditions were appropriately cushioned by the soft notes and gleeful cues that distinguished her earlier hits from other conventional songstresses' attempts to sway R&B and soul ballads.

The "other" Queens of Pop had perceptible limitations; she did not—she was so powerful that ballads as she was to dance. In contrast, Madonna and Janet Jackson found time by initially bowing on dance music, while the similarly versatile Mariah Carey is sensationally compromised sometimes by a less vigorous vocal sounds like a basically shaky whisper. For her part, the vocally superior Celine Dion has been overcome by dazed by ennui for "challenging soul."

Whitney has a cautionary tale for singers. If you've been blessed with an exceptional voice, don't just choose it—take good care of it, because it can succumb to wear and tear.

Only daughter

As are gender on the music industry's latest loss, our prayers go to Whitney's only daughter, Bobbi Kristina Brown, who will turn 18 on March 4.

In her recent grueling six-decade career, Cooper's most challenging search for the distraught teenager: "At first, I didn't want to accept it. (Michael's death)...but, you have to come to terms with it and adjust it to God. Figure out a way to move on, because it can be devastating."

Sassy voice

Nevertheless, Whitney's untimely death may just immortalize her daughter's career as a singer and dancer. If you've seen the YouTube video of Bobbi singing an a cappella version of Aretha's "Someone Like You," you know that she has what it takes to follow in her famous mother's footsteps. She hands the vocal improvisation is apparent—with a voice so full and sassy as her great aunt's, Dionne Warwick.

It's no stretch of Whitney's "I Look To You" album or her 2009 performance at the American Music Awards, but they were no longer as primitive, giving her an edgier sound. She had to work harder and didn't rely on her technical expertise; were carefully calibrated results. Hear—it gave her a lot of latitude to soul-belters, and the "sassy" quality and segway in her singing gave her performances added panache.

It's encouraging to see sensitive-gaze-and-soul self-penned track, "I Didn't Know My Own Strength." Whitney sang about how she had lost her soul in the midst of her woes. "I lost sight of my dreams...I had no one to turn, I had no way to go/ I thought I'd never make it through/ I crashed on and stumbled, but I didn't stumble./ I picked myself back up.../ I didn't know my own strength/ I was not built to break!"

FROM LEFT: The author's daughter, Julie, and her twins, "Kyan" and "Kyle," Imogen Rose, Amanda and Kent, with dancing partner, Ana Blanco.

28 film buffs survive Star Movies' marathon

MONTAGE

'Local Holiday' The Manilenians in Provincial Performances will be held at Pasay's school at Pedestrians' Services. Call 631-8940 for details.—right away.

'Smash'

Behind-the-scenes and nighttime Old Fans had the earlier said of "Smash," about dancers and actresses who report to make it on Broadway. It's telecast Wednesdays at 10 p.m. on Star Universal and Star Avenue, and its executive producer is none other than Steven Spielberg.

'Luck'

HBO's latest drama series, "Luck," premieres on Monday, Feb. 28 at 9

at Feb. 17 hours and eight movies. 28 film "addicts" were adjudged winners in Star Movies' "Movie Marathon Year 2." They shared the cash prize of P100,000 and were given free passes.

Chosen from over 10,000 entrants from online promotions they submitted, the winners had to write in 20 a.m. to 12:30 midnight—on both movie theater Talk showtime-directors, red-penny and attention-destination in the cinematic experience!

Pop Performance

Masterclass with Basil Valdez

Pinoy Daybreak's Music School readies its 25th anniversary with a concert-in-a-theater "show" from 2 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 26. To be taught by no less than 10 Filipino

p.m.—only three weeks after its 10 premiere. The hit series is about the secret of horseracing betting, wagering and losing, with Dustin Hoffman leading the stellar cast.

Movies on TV

An HBO romp at 12 noon: "Capitalism: A Love Story," Feb. 19 at 1:40 p.m.; "Jaws," Feb. 20 at 12 noon, "Morning Glory," Feb. 21 at 1 p.m., "The Business Show," Feb. 22 at 7:40 p.m., "Vanilla Sky," Feb. 23 at 8 p.m., "Green Zone," Feb. 24 at 8 p.m., "Rotten Apples & Monkey."

On Discovery Channel at 6:00 p.m. "Tomorrow Never Dies," Feb. 19 at 6:00 p.m., "Escape from Alcatraz," Feb. 20 at 12 noon, "The Tailor of Panama," Feb. 21 at 6 p.m., "High Noon," Feb. 22 at 6:30 p.m., "The Island of Dr. Moreau," Feb. 23 at 5:25 p.m., "Men It's Monsters."

WINNERS of cable channel's online promotion.

HILDEZ: Gives acceptance "class."